



The Boxcar Children

Shannon Eric Denton (Adapted By), Mike Dubisch (Illustrator), Gertrude Chandler Warner

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Henry, Jessie, Violet, and Benny Alden are brothers and sisters--and they're orphans. The only way they can stay together is to make it on their own. One night, during a storm, the children find an old red boxcar that keeps them warm and safe. They decide to make it their home.

The Boxcar Children Details

Date : Published February 1st 2009 by Albert Whitman Company (first published January 1st 2009)

ISBN : 9780807528679

Author : Shannon Eric Denton (Adapted By) , Mike Dubisch (Illustrator) , Gertrude Chandler Warner

Format : Paperback 32 pages

Genre : Sequential Art, Graphic Novels, Childrens, Middle Grade

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From Reader Review The Boxcar Children for online ebook

Thida says

I was a big fan of The Boxcar Children when I was a kid but I haven't read them for over two decades now. I checked out the graphic novel to revisit my childhood favorites and I can't understand why I was so addicted to them. The story doesn't make sense to me at all. Perhaps it did when I was a child.

Christina Cabezas says

Title: *Boxcar Children*

Author: Shannon Eric Denton

Illustrator: Mike Dubisch

Genre: Graphic novel

Theme(s): family, adventure, discovery.

Opening line/sentence:

One warm night four children stood in front of a bakery.

Brief Book Summary:

Henry, Jessie, Violet and Benny are a family of orphans in need of a home. They travel together in search of a place to keep safe, until they find an abandoned boxcar in the woods. There they stay, while Henry works in the city for a kind Doctor who gives him money and food.

Professional Recommendation/Review #1:

Stephanie Zvirin (Booklist, Mar. 1, 2009 (Vol. 105, No. 13))

Warner's Boxcar Children was published in 1942 to mixed reviews. Parents were alarmed that the novel's child heroes, the Alden siblings, got on so well without adult intervention. Children, however, felt empowered and enthusiastically applauded the young survivalists and their numerous further adventures. Denton, whose credits include work for the Cartoon Network, and Dubisch, best known for his fantasy comic artwork, have put together graphic-novel versions of some of the stories. In this first book, the orphaned Aldens set up housekeeping in an old boxcar, making the most of their particular strengths, until their grandfather takes them in. The story, though easy to read and follow, is presented in a surprisingly lackluster manner. The artwork, however, is more energetic, and the format works in the series favor, lending a contemporary feel even though the cars and clothes are vintage. The question remains, though, whether these modest pluses are enough to entice readers to continue to read the whole series (or find the original books).

Grades 3-4

(PUBLISHER: Magic Wagon (Edina Minn.:), PUBLISHED: c2009.)

Professional Recommendation/Review #2:

(5) 4-6 Illustrated by Mike Dubisch. Graphic Planet: Gertrude Chandler Warner's Boxcar Children series. These graphic novel versions of Warner's mystery stories retell the original tales in just thirty-two pages. They include only the bare bones of the plots and little of the excitement of children solving problems without adult help. In the cartoon illustrations, the setting is generic and the Alden siblings are practically interchangeable. Review covers these Graphic Planet: Gertrude Chandler Warner's Boxcar Children titles: The Boxcar Children, Surprise Island, and The Yellow House Mystery.

Response to Two Professional Reviews:

I would agree with these two reviews in that this graphic novel version of Warner's beloved Boxcar Children series does not quite do it justice. The graphic novel does not nearly include the level of depth that the original books do. However, the artwork is modern, fun, and will keep young students interested.

Evaluation of Literary Elements:

This graphic novel is easy to follow because the panels follow the traditional left-right, up-down directionality. The text is easy to read and includes simple language, perfect for younger readers. However, the story itself does not go into much depth, moving along rather quickly. The children's characters are not well developed, making it difficult to distinguish their individual personalities that are so well detailed in the original books.

Consideration of Instructional Application:

This graphic novel would be great for introducing young students to graphic novels. It is easy to read and follow-along, especially if children are already familiar with the Boxcar Children book series. From reading this graphic novel, children could create their own short graphic novel, or create a graphic novel based upon their favorite book. Also, children could write a continuation of the story or an alternate ending to this graphic novel.

Steph says

So much was left out from the novel version of the story that it made some parts laughable, but this graphic novel is really easy to read and generally tells the beloved story. (Which, as an adult, I honestly find to be hilarious. But somehow still adorable!)

The Book Girl (Andrea) says

Review to come.

Gail Lebeter says

Summary

The Alden children's parents have died. Running from their grandfather, who they are afraid to trust and more adults who would attempt to split them up, the orphans find an old boxcar in the woods where they decide to set up house. As they struggle to survive, the children make new friends and learn to rely on each other. This adaptation in the form of a graphic novel, based on the original Boxcar Children series, will pique the interest of children who might not normally pick up a chapter book.

Response

I did not enjoy this book at all! I found the story to be extremely unrealistic and as a mom, was freaking out a little over the kids sleeping on pine needles and drinking from cups they found in the junkyard. That being said, for children who do not enjoy reading, this would probably be a book they would enjoy because of the comic-strip feel. The orphans are child protagonists who are facing an issue all kids have thought about:

what they would do without their parents. It does have a straightforward storyline, although at times I felt as if there were parts missing. The story is set mostly in the woods around the boxcar and seems to be over the course of just a few days. The language did seem a bit simplistic. I noticed that the story itself is very dated. For example, when the oldest brother, Henry, goes into town to find work, he works all day and earns one dollar! Then with that dollar he able to buy enough meat and a loaf of bread to feed himself, his siblings and their dog. Obviously, that would never happen today! For this reason, I think some kids will read The Boxcar Children and find it old-fashioned.

Classroom Connections

This book could be linked to a social studies lesson discussing real-life children in the United States and around the world who really do have to take care of themselves and sometimes siblings, too. Students could also talk about what time period they believe this story takes place in and what clues from the story lead them to this belief. The class can also use this book in a language arts lesson, keeping a pretend journal based upon what they would be doing if they were one of the Alden children. A science lesson connection could be having students research plants that are edible and plants that should be avoided in the woods.

Text Complexity

The Boxcar Children, A Graphic Novel has a Lexile and GR that are unknown.

Nicole D. says

It's great to revisit a childhood favorite and find yourself as enchanted as you remembered. A cute fun adventure.

Definitely for younger ages.

Rachael says

This book is good for grades 3 through 5.

This is the first book to a series about three adventurous young children living in the 1920s. In this book, the children discover an abandoned boxcar, and decide to make it their home. How will the children survive, and what adventures will come next?

I personally loved this series as a child, and I think it is a great series to present to young readers. Although the books are dated, and present gender stereotypes, children reading will understand it is a story from the past. I think it provides a fun glimpse into what these children lived like in America in the 1920s.

This book (and series) could be provided for students to free read in the class library. I think it could also be used as a book group book where I, the teacher, could discuss specific aspects of the story with the group.

Sylvia says

The illustrations were great but I wished it was a little longer.

Nancy says

When it comes to graphic novels, I have always been confused. Are they novels or are they comic books? Asking around, the only consensus that I can find is that they are pretty much comic books but produced on higher quality paper and bound like a book. That was not very helpful, so I decided to take the plunge and check it out.

When it comes to content, opinions vary. You either love them or do not understand the attraction. For me, I fall into the latter category. I just do not get the appeal.

The Boxcar children was originally published in 1924 and is a well know story centered around four children who create a home for themselves in an abandoned boxcar in the forest before they go to live with their grandfather they mistakenly thought to be a cruel man. I figured, why not start with an easy story to see if the whole “graphic” thing would help or hinder the storyline.

Personally, I think too much was left out. Relatively speaking, there were not many words and the reader was left to fill in the blanks with the illustrations.

Maybe that was the point and I am just too old to get it.

Truly, I do not mean to be insulting or dense, but I just did not get it. Obviously, others have had much better outcomes with this genre and I applaud their respect for the novels, but they are wasted on me.

Tony Montez says

Summary

This is a graphic novel about the Alden family children whose parents passed away and were suppose to go live with their grandfather. They were nervous that their grandfather would not like them so before ever meeting him they ran away. They would move around from place to place until eventually one day they discovered a boxcar in the woods. They all worked at making it homely and once settled in, Henry Alden would go into town to get food and look for work to make money. He began Helping Dr. Moore around his house doing small side jobs and usually got paid a dollar plus the doctor would give him food or goodies to take back with him. One day Violet Alden became sick and the doctor took her and the other children to his house to take care of her and the doctor had a special friend over. After meeting all of the children, the children began to like this other man and after a while of thinking about it, they realized it was their grandfather. They decided to go live with their grandfather and it ended by him getting the boxcar and moving it to their new house so that they would have something to play with and make it feel like home.

Reflection

I thought this graphic novel was ok. Id rate it a 3 star book. I found it interesting however it was a bit

predictable and I just felt that it was missing something to really make me love the book. The book has a very simple language which makes it easy to read and understand for children. Also the comic feel to this book I think would make kids enjoy the book more. One of the elements that I enjoyed about it was how they talked about being alone as kids (or even adults) they showed you how to find simple thing in nature and how to utilize them for your benefit and help you survive. However I think the book seemed a bit unrealistic by the way they just kept running away and then when they finally find their grandfather, he wasn't upset or didn't seem too worried.

Classroom Connection

One of the things that I thought about that stood out to me in this graphic novel was how the kids were able to survive in the wild like that using nature to their benefit. I could do a writing lesson on what did the children use that they found in nature to help them survive. Then I could expand that and say, what kinds of things could you think of to do in the wild if you were stranded? What if you were not close to a town and had no food? This will help the children practice writing, get them thinking, and teach them knowledge on basics survival skills.

Text Complexity

Lexile unknown

Nicole says

The Boxcar children was one of my favorite series as a child. I am participating in a challenge where I have to read a graphic novel and when I found this, I was quite excited! It is true to the original plus I could read it over lunch at work!

Araceli says

Text to text - Of course this graphic novel reminded me of the original Boxcar Children book although it left out elements of the book which is to be expected when converting a existing non-visual story into the visual medium. But it also brought me back to other older series such as the Nancy Drew books because of the strong and independent younger characters.

Text to Self - This graphic novel brought on quite a few nostalgic feelings for me because I LOVED the Boxcar Children when I was a kid. I must have reread it a dozen times and even read a lot of the mystery spin off books. It really just spoke to me because I have a sibling that I am very close to and even as a kid I knew I could get through anything with him.

Text to world - The Boxcar children has kind of a universal appeal because it is about the power of family and overcoming obstacles as a family for and for your family.

Morgan Courtney says

This series was always one of my favorites growing up. I read quite a few out of the series, probably close to twenty or so. I decided to pick up on the first one to see where it all began. The series is about these four orphans who make a home within a box car. In the process, they find their grandfather. Throughout the

series, the four children, Henry, Jessie, Violet, and Benny share several adventures, including many mysteries. At each end of the book, there's always a need to pick up the next novel in the series. Always great when you wish a story would continue and it does!

I think this would be a great beginner series for young children. The vocabulary isn't too difficult, and because the words are a little bigger, the book is easier to read and doesn't take as long. This book is also a good source for children to work their imaginations while possibly relating to each other these characters. I was in foster care, so growing up reading these books was always nice to relate to! I'd assume many other children would approve and do the same.

Beth says

The Boxcar Children series has been a popular one for many years. This graphic novel version of the original story is very engaging and I believe our young readers will enjoy it. The author did not change the story line or the characters. These four children, whose parents have died, are worried that their grandfather will not like them and want to split them up. So they take off on their own and find an abandoned boxcar in the woods where they live. The oldest boy goes to the nearest town to find work and is fortunate enough to work for a doctor who happens to know the grandfather. He unites them and the children find out that their grandpa loves them and wants them. The love the siblings have for one another is very evident in this story. I found this graphic novel version easy to follow and more engaging than the original book.

Lindsey Johnson says

When I saw that there was a graphic novel series of the Boxcar Children, I was immediately interested in reading a couple of them. I thought the illustrations in this series was great and drew me in as a reader, but I did not enjoy the stories as much in graphic novel form. I like the aspect of graphic novels that allows readers to feel more like the story is coming to life because the pages are filled with pictures and there are more conversations and thoughts than narrative description, but the story was lacking in interest and detail without the narrative piece. I would consider keeping this series in my classroom for my students who love graphic novels and comics because they are easy to read and follow and the illustrations are good, but it was not my favorite series in graphic novel form.
