



The Bat Boy and His Violin

Gavin Curtis, E.B. Lewis (Illustrator)

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Reginald loves to create beautiful music on his violin. But Papa, manager of the Dukes, the worst team in the Negro National League, needs a bat boy, not a "fiddler," and traveling with the Dukes doesn't leave Reginald much time for practicing.

Soon the Dukes' dugout is filled with Beethoven, Mozart, and Bach -- and the bleachers are filled with the sound of the Dukes' bats. Has Reginald's violin changed the Dukes' luck -- and can his music pull off a miracle victory against the powerful Monarchs?

Gavin Curtis's beautifully told story of family ties and team spirit and E. B. Lewis's lush watercolor paintings capture a very special period in history.

The Bat Boy and His Violin Details

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Author : Gavin Curtis , E.B. Lewis (Illustrator)

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From Reader Review The Bat Boy and His Violin for online ebook

Latanya (CraftyScribbles) says

Beautiful tale of how the smallest person can be the greatest inspiration to anyone.

Samantha Kent says

This book is about a little African-American boy named Reginald, who loves to play the violin and he practices at home all the time. One day his father came home after a baseball game which the team he is the manager of, the Dukes, lose. He thinks that Reginald spends too much time inside and decides that he can be the bat boy for the Dukes. The Dukes are considered to be the worst team in the Negro National League but after Reginald plays his violin during the game the team starts to win the games. At the end of the book Reginald gets to play his recital at his home for his parents and the players and their wives.

This book gives kids the perspective of what it was like for African-Americans during the time of segregation without making it hit you in the face. It also shows that even though they were treated differently that they were still happy and could participate in things that made them happy.

Vannessa Anderson says

Reginald enjoyed playing the violin and he practiced all the time. While his mother supported him, his dad wanted him to become a baseball player. His dad cut into Reginald's practice time by making him become bat boy for the Negro team he managed. Reginald takes his violin with him and practice when he can. Reginald is clumsy as a bat boy but is not clumsy with the violin. The team was on a losing streak until Reginald inspired the players by playing his violin. **The Bat Boy & His Violin** was a delightful read.

Sam Grace says

Gorgeous watercolor illustrations by E.B. Lewis totally deserved to win the Coretta Scott King Honor for Illustration, but they did not outshine also excellent story. The summary - boy who loves to play the violin is unappreciated by Negro Leagues baseball playing dad until he becomes the batboy and helps them win games - doesn't really do justice to the subtlety in the storytelling, though the coolness of the history and the message don't hurt the book either.

Beth Crownover says

I really enjoyed this book. I like how it included historical elements, family values, and music culture. This picture book is more appropriate for middle grade elementary to older children, second to fifth grade. There is a lot of text on each page and younger students may have a harder time paying attention the entire time.

Since the book is historical it would apply better to older children who are learning these themes in history. I liked how it showed the opposite side of what happened to the Negro Baseball Leagues after Jackie Robinson left, and from a young boy's perspective made the history not didactic. The illustrations are done in watercolor as said on the endpage of the book. They are done in an impressionist style because the lines are blurred, and the artist plays with light and color throughout the illustrations. Many of the illustrations cross the gutter but the characters and scene is on one page while the text is on the other. The only downfall of this book is that the little boy calls the songs he plays be the composer and those can be difficult to pronounce when reading aloud so it is important to practice beforehand. This book was a Coretta Scott King Award.

Gavin says

I enjoyed this short book about a boy, his father, who coached a Negro League team. The father wanted his son to drop the violin and be a bat boy for the team, hoping that would lead him towards what the father considered the better path. I'll stop there, but in this day and age, and even in the 1950's this is a nice tale.

Tess Upchurch says

Despite Reginald's love for music his father forces him to work as the bat boy for his baseball team. The young boy travels with the team and uses spare bits of time to practice. He soon begins to play for the team and their rotten luck begins to take a turn for the better.

This book originally caught my eye because of the musical aspect. I am in the marching band and am therefore interested in any book dealing with music. I really enjoyed that music was portrayed as a useful and beneficial practice in this story. I also really liked that this book gave a childlike perspective on the events of segregation. This is a unique viewpoint that helps readers create a well rounded understanding of how times changed for African Americans during this time period. This book would make a great addition to my classroom library. I could potentially be used as a read aloud when discussing the period of segregation in America.

J-Lynn says

I really liked this story about a boy who is better at playing violin than being a bat boy in the final year of the Negro National League. This is a simple story of a father who learns to appreciate his musically gifted son who becomes a good luck charm for the Dukes baseball team.

E. B. Lewis' signature water color lends a soft edge to this touching story.

Lois says

I read a review of this Caldecott winner book in the Washington Post kids section. It is about a boy growing up in 1948. His father is manager of a team in the Negro National League during its last days, as baseball began to be integrated as a national sport. The father believes his son, who is passionate about playing his

violin, needs more fresh air and exercise, and of course exposure to baseball!

What I loved was the father's growing appreciation of his son, and the son "stepping up to the plate" as batboy for the father's team. The father-son negotiation and the father's affirmation of love for his son as even more important than his interest in having his son involved with sports was lovely.

I bought two copies. One for a grandson whose father loves baseball, and whose younger brother loves music. The other copy? For ME of course!

Cathy says

Reginald loves to create beautiful music on his violin. But Papa, manager of the Dukes, the worst team in the Negro National League, needs a bat boy, not a "fiddler," and traveling with the Dukes doesn't leave Reginald much time for practicing.

Soon the Dukes' dugout is filled with Beethoven, Mozart, and Bach -- and the bleachers are filled with the sound of the Dukes' bats. It appears that Reginald's violin changed the Dukes' luck -- and his music seems to pull off a miracle victory against the powerful Monarchs.

Emily P says

We found this gem at a used bookstore in our little town, and it was lovely. My youngest loves baseball almost as much as I do, so we usually connect with stories like this one. Reginald is less interested in baseball than his violin. His father, a manager for "the worst team in the Negro leagues," encourages him to get outside more and talks him into becoming a bat boy. However, Reginald won't go without his violin, which he plays for the team. As the team listens to Reginald, it begins a rally that helps this losing team come back from behind for an unexpected victory. My son and I enjoyed the history, family dynamics and sweet quality of the characters. I would recommend this book to any kid who loves both the baseball diamond and the beauty of music.

Cosette says

Truly a beautiful book that I'll have to read again with my violin and sheet music. I had to make do with YouTube which gave me goosebumps, but only put my listener to sleep.

Sarah says

The Bat Boy & His Violin

<http://eblewis.com/books/the-bat-boy-...>

shows many illustrations from the book

This book was awarded the Coretta Scott King Award for peace, non-violent social change and brotherhood.

I would recommend this book for older grades 3-5 because of the author's writing style. He uses long paragraphs with high level vocabulary words often.

Synthesis

Set in 1948, *The Bat Boy & His Violin* is a story of Reginald who loves playing the violin while his father, the coach of the Dukes, the worst baseball team in the Negro National League, dreams of him playing baseball instead of making music. To convince his son to play baseball, he tells Reginald he will be the new bat boy. When Reginald seems concerned about being able to practice the violin, his father just tells him he can play “tween innings”. Reginald accidentally causes the players on the team to mess up by the way he is handling the bats, and his dad tells him to “relax a spell on the bench. It’ll give you a chance to fiddle.” Frustrated because he didn’t do well and because his dad keeps calling his violin a fiddle, Reginald plays Swan Lake, sad and quiet. The players like Reginald’s playing and they begin to do well at bat while he is playing. Reginald’s father begins to take pride in his son, massaging Reginald’s arm instead of his pitcher’s. Reginald continues to play and the Dukes continue to win. Right before the big game the Dukes have to sleep on their bus because a white clerk won’t let them stay in his hotel. Reginald plays his best during the game, but the Dukes lose. Reginald is afraid that his father will stop liking his music now that it didn’t help win the game, but Papa assures him he still does like his music and tells Reginald “I love you, though, most of all. Win or lose-Negro Leagues or not-ain’t no ball game ever gonna change that.” The next week at the church recital everyone comes to see Reginald play. One of the Dukes’ players tells Papa that he likes Reginald’s fiddle playing, and Papa responds that he does too, “cept we prefer to call it a violin.”

Use of Text in the Classroom

I would use this text as an introduction to discuss what life was like in the late 1940s, focusing in on the ongoing segregation of Whites and Blacks. It can be used as the opening of a larger lesson, using the engaging baseball story to grasp the students’ attention and then move on to more specifically segregation based topics. I also want to go off the students’ feelings in the book to create empathy within them. How would they feel if their dad said that to them, that he didn’t even appreciate what Reginald was doing enough to call his instrument the correct name? How would they feel if someone told them they couldn’t stay somewhere because of the color of their skin? What about when the team lost? What if that was their team? To feel the weight and sadness of that allows you to feel the joy Reginald had when Papa was proud of him. Empathy is something that can be very important to teach in this book, linking to the larger skill of empathy when learning history.

This is a WOW Book Because

The Bat Boy & His Violin is a WOW book not only because of its impressive and uplifting story, but because of what time period and era the book is set in. Besides a baseball story, there are many issues of segregation in play. First of all, there is still a separate baseball league for African American baseball players, and while “folks are sayin’ now baseball’s becoming integrated” there are still places that remain segregated, like the hotel the Dukes tried to stay at.

“We don’t exactly cotton to coloreds sleepin’ in our beds, one white clerk says. “Y’all are gonna have to look elsewhere.”

This story brings this time period and battle of integration and segregation to life. By having a relatable story student can be engaged enough to learn about the hardships and injustices of that time for African Americans. Getting the students emotionally connected to the characters and situation is very important as well. By identifying and supporting the characters the students are that much more indignant than they would have been otherwise. It also pushes the reader’s mind out of stereotypes that they might have of a Black

family in the 1940s by having pictures of family members in caps and gowns in the illustrations. I thought that was too well placed to overlook.

I also thought this was a powerful book due to the way that Reginald's father handled the discrimination he faced, another important thing to cover with students. "Thank you kindly, just the same," Papa says, tipping his cap. "I reckon our bus will do just fine." The Dukes grilled and played music in the parking lot, making the most out of that situation, joyful.

I am impressed with this book because not only is it able to do all that I have listed above, but also able to be a book with strong family values and relationships. Throughout the season Reginald's relationship with his father improves. Once the season is over though, Reginald's father has realized that it was not baseball that made him love his son, but that he loved his son for who he was as a person, with his own hopes and talents, even defending Reginald at the end by saying "cept we prefer to call it a violin" because he knew how much that meant to Reginald.

Anna Sunderland says

The Bat Boy and His Violin is a book that I just recently picked up to read. I love sports and I saw that it was a Coretta Scott King Award Recipient and so I knew I had to read it. The cover is a matte finish with a boy in a baseball uniform playing a violin, while a scene in the background wraps around the cover of men playing baseball. The end pages have nothing on them. On the copyright page it states that the illustrations are rendered in watercolors, which is what my guess was from the cover of the book. The book is set in the late 1940's with Reginald's father managing a Negro National baseball team. Because of the depth of the conversations in the book and the wordiness of the text, I would recommend this book for second through fourth graders. Some younger children might like this book read to them, but it might be harder for them to follow along. The book is sweet and shares a relationship between a father and son despite differences they might have. The illustrations are beautiful and the pictures are very realistic. The children will appreciate the pictures to follow along with the story, even though the story is really the most powerful part. Teachers can use this in class when talking about this certain time period. The book does touch on racism when the players are turned away from a hotel, but the author instead decides to focus on the father son relationship. I loved this book and will read it many more times.

Lizzie says

Such a heart warming story paired with soft illustrations. Great father/son read.
