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Goats, The



Synopsis

Harmless camp pranks can quickly spiral out of control, but they also provide a perfect opportunity for two social outcasts to overcome and triumph. A boy and a girl are stripped and marooned on a small island for the night. They are the "goats." The kids at camp think it's a great joke, just a harmless old tradition. But the goats don't see it that way. Instead of trying to get back to camp, they decide to call home. But no one can come and get them. So they're on their own, wandering through a small town trying to find clothing, food, and shelter, all while avoiding suspicious adults—especially the police. The boy and the girl find they rather like life on their own. If their parents ever do show up to rescue them, the boy and the girl might be long gone. . . . The Goats is a 1987 New York Times Book Review Notable Children's Book of the Year.

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Customer Reviews

A boy and the girl have been chosen as "the goats" at summer camp. Stripped naked, they are marooned on Goat Island, as part of an annual prank played on campers who don't fit in. But the goats have much more spirit than their fellow campers expect, and they decide to disappear completely—they aren't going to go back to camp unless they absolutely have to. On the run, Howie and Laura meet many different people—some who help them, others who try to stop them—but they soon learn how very strong they are themselves, and they come to depend on their own resourcefulness and cunning to evade those who are trying to find them. But Howie and Laura know that they must, at some point, face the world they've left behind. Cole has written and illustrated

many picture books (The Winter Wren, The Giant's Toe), but this is his first work for older readers. Written with the mastery and sureness of a seasoned novelist, it is a gripping, startling and thought-provoking story about children who find inner strength when they are pushed to the edge. Ages 8-12. Copyright 1987 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Audio Cassette edition.

Grade 8-10 Wimp, nerd, social retard some kids just naturally become scapegoats. Luckily an inner strength and an ability to survive sometimes surface, and these same scapegoats can confound their parents and acquaintances. Cole portrays this when fellow campers leave wimpy Howie Mitchell and ``real dog'' Laura Golden naked and scared on an island. When counselors arrive looking for them, Howie misunderstands and fears the return of their tormenters. He forces non-swimmer Laura to hang onto a log and float to the mainland. Reaching the safety of a deserted cabin, and realizing that they can't face returning to camp, they plot their survival until Parent's Weekend, when Laura's mother will visit, offering hope of sanctuary. Cole manages to instill just the right amount of suspense in their adventures through a potentially dangerous street kid, a cleaning woman who wants to turn them in to the police, and a sheriff who eventually snags them. Neither Howie nor Laura are initially likable kids, each either worrying or whining too much, but as they grow so does one's regard for them. The final distillation is a strong, well-blended story of modern day survival. A comparable book for older readers would be Lloyd Kropp's Greencastle (Freundlich, 1987). Pam Spencer, Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, Fairfax County, Va. Copyright 1987 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Audio Cassette edition.

I am amazed that there are naive people out there who use such terms as "explicit", "sexual", or even "inappropriate" in relation to this book's content. I suppose you could call it "frank", but I would think that this book is mild in comparison to 5th/6th grade playground talk. I think by this age most kids are pretty sure what the other sex--and there are only two of them, physically--looks like. If not, then they are going to look whenever they can; if they don't, then I'd be a little worried. Another negative reviewer found the writing very poor; however, I am also a voracious reader, and I thought the character and plot development to be well conceived and presented; I found the flow and consistency of thought to be very much above average, and I had no problem envisioning where the kids were at any point in the story and where the camp is likely located. For an adult book, even a young-adult book, I would probably give this four, four and a half stars, but for a book in the middle-age school libraries, it has to be a full five.

I read this book after seeing the movie "Standing Up" which is based upon the book. I hate bullying, but I love a story where the kids defeat the bullies with an even greater intensity. Laura and Howie run away from camp after they are the recipients of a cruel joke. Even though they are very young, they do a great job of keeping care of one another. The adults in the story do not take the bullying seriously. This story is a good lesson for both parents and kids. There is a little bit of bad language, but not so much that I put the book down. I did not like the ending at all, as it left too much in the air. The movie is fantastic. Read this book first and then watch the movie.

Saw this in the school library, then saw the movie as one of 's recommendations for me. Decided to read the book. Too bad many shortsighted nay sayers try to get it banned because of a small bit of childish nudity. It is PG rated reading for goodness sake! This should be required reading for all students in this bullying society. The Goats shows what can happen when the human heart is forced to step above the petty bullies who can often ruin young people's lives.

I read the book and finally got to see the movie. This book is apparently banned by my local library. Hard to believe. It is basically a story of two kids surviving a cruel joke, being abandoned on an island with nothing and how they managed to survive. I thoroughly enjoyed the book. I only wish that I had the movie. I finally found it on a website out of Russia!! The movie is exceptional in its portrayal of events. I would recommend the book to anyone interested in a heartwarming story of how two kids left with nothing were able to survive.

An interesting plot premise and a good basic story, but poorly written and too-suddenly concluded. All the characters are shallow and missing the back-stories that could make them more real. It read like a teenager's attempt at a novel. I can see where it could be used in school for discussion purposes, but I would not recommend it to anyone looking for a well-written story.

Haven't you ever felt like you would just like to get away from life and live out your fantasy on the run. Make the bullies pay for being mean, but to do it in a way that doesn't hurt you. I really empathized with these characters. I was the little Dweeb in school that everyone else picked on.

Very good book. Bullying is a problem and it did not just happen. It's been happening. It allows for the 6th grade reader to ask and answer some serious questions about bullying and the part they

would or would not play in it. Even this book is a "restricted" book, I think students would benefit from having read this book.

Realistic, well paced, thoughtful tale of bullying/hazing and its consequences. Does not pander to obvious solutions or intervention (which generally does not occur). Strongly recommended, for 11+ audience (or in classroom).

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