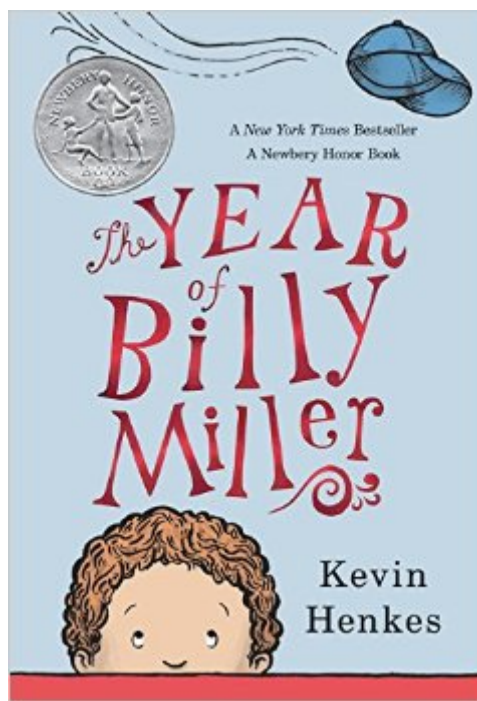


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The Year Of Billy Miller



Synopsis

A 2014 Newbery Honor Book A New York Times Bestseller Award-winning, nationally bestselling author Kevin Henkes introduces second-grader Billy Miller in this fast-paced and funny story about friendship, sibling rivalry, and elementary school. *The Year of Billy Miller* includes black-and-white art by Kevin Henkes and is perfect for fans of the Ramona books; *Frindle*, by Andrew Clements; and the Clementine series. The New York Times declared: "Henkes's delightful story is restrained and vivid . . . forgoing the overdramatic or zany, it shows the substance, warmth and adaptability of beautifully common family love." When Billy Miller has a mishap at the statue of the Jolly Green Giant at the end of summer vacation, he ends up with a big lump on his head. What a way to start second grade, with a lump on your head! As the year goes by, though, Billy figures out how to navigate elementary school, how to appreciate his little sister, and how to be a more grown up and responsible member of the family and a help to his busy working mom and stay-at-home dad. Newbery Honor author and Caldecott Medalist Kevin Henkes delivers a short, satisfying, laugh-out-loud-funny school and family story that features a diorama homework assignment, a school poetry slam, cancelled sleepovers, and epic sibling temper tantrums. This is a perfect short novel for the early elementary grades.

Book Information

Paperback: 240 pages

Publisher: Greenwillow Books; Reprint edition (May 26, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0062268147

ISBN-13: 978-0062268143

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.7 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 11.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (112 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #14,663 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #93 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > New Experiences](#) #141 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Friendship, Social Skills & School Life > Self-Esteem & Self-Respect](#) #499 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Friendship, Social Skills & School Life > Friendship](#)

Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

Customer Reviews

I don't readily compare books to Ramona (now THERE'S a sentence opener, ladies and gentlemen). To compare any children's book to Beverly Cleary's classic series just leaves one wide open to ridicule. The Ramona books are classics for a very particular reason; they place a sturdy, hard-as-nails finger directly on an age that is traditionally forgotten. Kids between the ages of six and ten are nebulous creatures. Too old to be cute little itty bitties and too young to enjoy the rights and privileges of their older kin, the 6-10 year old crowd straddles our traditional age ranges. Walk into any library or bookstore and you'll see titles for kids separated in a very particular fashion: picture books, easy readers (for when they're first learning to read), early chapter books (self-explanatory), and middle grade fiction. What's missing is what the Ramona books are. They're older than early chapter fiction but younger than middle grade. There is no term for this kind of book, and indeed it's one of the most difficult types of books to locate on a shelf. Now, at long last, The Year of Billy Miller comes to occupy that same space, but its similarities to Ramona don't stop there. Filled with heart, smarts, humor, and a boy-centric p.o.v. that is almost impossible to pin down, Henkes has finally done for the chapter book set what he's been doing for the picture book readers for years. He's created a character for the ages. Billy Miller wasn't always worried that he wouldn't be smart enough for second grade. To be blunt, the idea never even entered his brain. Then he fell. It wasn't life-threatening or anything but that fall from a guardrail to the ground certainly gave him a bump on the noggin.

There are lots of great books out there for middle graders and older elementary schoolers. There are lots of fun and interesting pre-school and very early reader books. Whole franchises have been built around simple chapter books. And, there are certainly some fine books for adventurous second grade readers. But, most of those second grader books are introductory level fantasy/adventures or semi-frantic sort-of-zany school daze tales. Then we have "The Year of Billy Miller". It would be easy to rhapsodize about this book and I certainly wouldn't fault anyone for doing so. It is calm, gentle, sweet and knowing, but for all that it takes considerable risks. Billy is entering second grade and has doubts about his ability to handle it. On top of that, as the story progresses, he has concerns about a variety of other problems that can plague 7 year olds - like whether his new teacher likes him, how to address his parents in a more "grown up" manner, how to deal with anger at his younger sister, nightmares, and the list goes on. Now, this isn't a "problem" novel or a disguised parenting manual. It is an engaging sort-of-stream-of-consciousness novel in which an appealing decent kid expresses his hopes and fears and joys in an honest and authentic fashion.

The author's genius is in expressing all of those thoughts in a convincing and not at all precious manner, in avoiding or at least completely refashioning all school story clichés, and then in arranging the action and developing the plot in such a way that Billy's various issues are addressed and resolved in a satisfying and usually touching way. Treatment of all of the characters is generous. Billy's Momma and Papa are well rounded; sister Sal is alternately annoying and lovable; the teacher Ms.

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