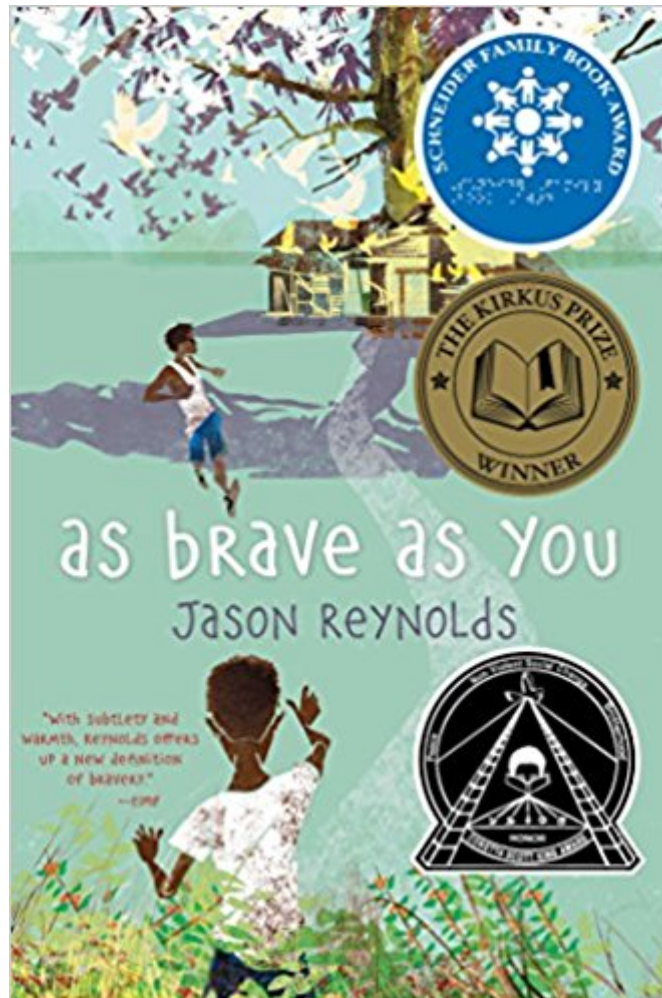




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As Brave As You



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Synopsis

Kirkus Award Finalist Schneider Family Book Award Winner Coretta Scott King Author Honor Book

When two brothers decide to prove how brave they are, everything backfires—literally—in this “pitch-perfect contemporary novel” (Kirkus Reviews, starred review) by the winner of the Coretta Scott King Award. Genie’s summer is full of surprises. The first is that he and his big brother, Ernie, are leaving Brooklyn for the very first time to spend the summer with their grandparents all the way in Virginia—in the COUNTRY! The second surprise comes when Genie figures out that their grandfather is blind. Thunderstruck, Genie peppers Grandpop with questions about how he hides it so well (besides wearing way cool Ray-Bans). How does he match his clothes? Know where to walk? Cook with a gas stove? Pour a glass of sweet tea without spilling it? Genie thinks Grandpop must be the bravest guy he’s ever known, but he starts to notice that his grandfather never leaves the house—as in NEVER. And when he finds the secret room that Grandpop is always disappearing into—a room so full of songbirds and plants that it’s almost as if it’s been pulled inside-out—he begins to wonder if his grandfather is really so brave after all. Then Ernie lets him down in the bravery department. It’s his fourteenth birthday, and, Grandpop says to become a man, you have to learn how to shoot a gun. Genie thinks that is AWESOME until he realizes Ernie has no interest in learning how to shoot. None. Nada. Dumbfounded by Ernie’s reluctance, Genie is left to wonder—is bravery and becoming a man only about proving something, or is it just as important to own up to what you won’t do?

Book Information

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Age Range: 10 - 12 years

Grade Level: 5 and up

Customer Reviews

Gr 5-8-Reynolds's engaging middle grade debut stars 11-year-old African American Genie Harris, an inveterate worrywart who considers Google his best friend, and his older brother Ernie, who is well on his way to being a cool dude (sunglasses and all). The born and bred Brooklynites are to spend a month with their grandparents in rural Virginia while their parents take a long overdue vacation and work out their marital problems. It is only after the boys are left in their grandfather's care that they realize that he is blind. They are also surprised to learn that they are expected to do chores and follow their grandmother's strict rules-and that it is possible to exist (sort of) without the Internet. While Ernie crushes on the girl who lives at the base of the hill, Genie writes down his many burning questions so he doesn't forget them and gets to know his proud and fiercely independent grandfather. Genie barrages Grandpop with questions about his past and present abilities and about the quirky aspects of the household, especially his "nunya bidness" room, his harmonica playing, and how Grandpop might not be able to see but still packs a pistol. As the languid days unfold, the boys learn about country life and the devastating loss of the elder Harris' son during Desert Storm and their estrangement from their living son, the boys' father. Grandpop Harris is a complicated, irascible character, full of contradictions and vulnerabilities, the least of which is his lack of vision. Reynolds captures the bond that Grandpop and Genie form in a tender, believable, and entertaining way, delivered through smart and funny prose and sparkling dialogue. VERDICT A richly realized story about life and loss, courage and grace, and what it takes to be a man. Although a tad lengthy, it is easy reading and will be appreciated by a broad audience.-Luann Toth, School Library Journal (c) Copyright 2011. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

"This pitch-perfect contemporary novel gently explores the past's repercussions on the present." - "Kirkus Reviews," starred review

Libby's Literary Corner for Young Readers, Ages 10 and up, Grades 5 and up:
Jason Reynolds, author of *Ghost* has written another winner, literally, in *As Brave As You*. This novel earned the Schneider Family Book Award for a story that embodies an artistic expression of the disability experience for child and adolescent audiences as well as the Coretta Scott King Honor award for a book on Peace, Non-Violent Social Change and Brotherhood. Brothers Genie and Ernie are left with their southern grandparents way out in the country for a LONG summer month while their parents try to "work things out". Genie is the serious kid, the one with a hundred questions and Google generally on speed-dial. Unfortunately Grandma doesn't have a computer, a serious problem for Genie. He has even more questions in this new environment like why does visually impaired Grandpop refuse to leave the house? "Grits? What, exactly, are they?" "Where is Sam Hill? I thought we were in North Hill." The questions are endless, keeping him up at night. Ernie, on the other hand, almost fourteen, is a lady's man and provides the saving grace for Genie when they befriend a young neighbor, Tess, who does have a computer. Tess's rifle-toting dad, Crab, drives Grandma crazy and maintains a questionable relationship with Grandpop, leaving money and bottles each time he visits. Reclusive Grandpop spends solitary hours in a soundproof jungle haven with caged swallows, reminiscent of the mysterious deserted yellow country house Genie and Ernie discover. Why is there a tree growing right up through the middle of the house? Who spends time there? What attracts the hundreds of birds to that house? Genie and Ernie are stretched to the limit in their coming-of-age season with Grandma and Grandpop. They learn the value of hard work, the importance of integrity, the many faces of fear and the incredible healing power of love and forgiveness. (My husband Jim thoroughly enjoyed this novel, too.)

Although *AS BRAVE AS YOU* started off slowly, it got better and better; I found myself wondering WHAT WILL HAPPEN NEXT? I loved the relationship that the brothers shared, appreciated the bond that Genie enjoyed with his peculiar grandfather, and was happy (yes, happy) to see the book mention the struggles that Genie's parents were going through in their marriage. In those three instances you see the importance of family over "stuff," you see the everyday struggles that we all face and you see yourself in the pages. You realize that you are not alone, and that if the characters might have had a hard go of it for a bit and managed to move past it---you can, too. These are all important lessons that we hope as educators to pass on to our kids. I also like the idea of opening up

discussions about what it is "to be a man," cultural and gender biases, and mutual respect for one another. There are strong examples and non-examples throughout the book. The fact that this is an African-American family is a bonus because of our need to place diverse books on those shelves, but it never felt contrived or an especially important part of the story. Aren't we all humans, after all? Jason Reynolds is a highly-regarded author, and for good reason. I look forward to book talking this one in the fall to my readers.

A wonderful story for upper elementary/middle students about two city boys who find themselves learning about life in the country while staying with their grandparents. A rich story, Jason Reynolds has woven a tale to underline the power of truth even when it hurts.

Bought this for my 10 year old son. We read the first chapter together and loved it; especially since the characters are visiting Virginia. Great discussion questions at the end and a preview of another book , which immediately got my son's attention. We had a great discussion about the book once he was done.

Great Book - ordered a class set for my students.

I purchased this book for my 13 year old nephew and he has read over 100 pages in 2 days! He says he enjoys the characters and storyline so far.

Daughter enjoyed it

Great story! Two boys from the city are transplanted over the summer to stay with grandparents they never visit who live in the country.

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