

Approved for use in 7th grade

Summary of the Work:

Billy is a boy growing up in the 1930s in the Ozark Mountains of Oklahoma. He works hard to earn money to buy two dogs for hunting. Billy eventually gets his dogs and becomes one of the area's greatest coon hunters. He goes with his dad and grandfather to a regional raccoon hunt. A blizzard hits on the last night of the conference, but Billy's dogs tree the raccoon and win the contest. Upon returning, Billy and his dogs run into a mountain lion, and his dogs can't leave the fight.

Rationale:

Even with the setting taking place during the Great Depression, there is timelessness to this simple story. Rawls instills this autobiographical piece with a strong sense of right and wrong, as well as innocence and integrity. This title is an excellent selection for anyone desiring an uplifting, but realistic tale.

Major themes include: determination, sacrifice, love and loyalty, and family.

Professional Reviews and/or Critical Essays:

* Print resources are available from the library media center and libraries in the district. Contact any library media specialist to view the scholarly sources.

* Scholarly reviews are also available online through Books in Print and Gale. Contact the library media specialist to obtain username and password information to access the subscription database of full-text reviews.

Noted Distinction:

- Great Stone Face Children's Book Award 1989
- a Literary Guild selection
- Massachusetts Children's Book Award 1987
- Great Stone Face Award 1989
- North Dakota Children's Book Award 1981

Readability:

- Lexile Score: 700
- Readability Level:

Learning Resources Guidelines:

- The novel meets the Learning Resources Guidelines.

Standard Alignment: [\(link\)](#)

Approval:

Submitted to Committee:

Approved for Adoption:

Notes on the Text:

(The best way to evaluate and understand a novel is to personally read the book in its entirety.)

The main character, Billy, encounters several difficult issues including experiencing bullying, watching his animals fight, and dealing with death.

Connection to the Curriculum:

This book brings a personal connection to students through the concept of having a pet. The author does a great job of character and plot development enabling readers to examine these literary devices. As students work on reading fluency, visualization is key to helping the story flow. In addition, the character demonstrates admirable virtues throughout the book.

Students can also learn about the Cherokee history, language, and culture. The following link is the Official Site of the Cherokee Nation based in Tahlequah, Oklahoma:

<http://www.cherokee.org/>

Additional Connections:

(AP, Honors, Essential/Applied, Dramas, Films, etc.)

- Made into a motion picture by Doty-Dayton Productions and released in March 1974
- Made into a motion picture by Walt Disney and released in 2003

<http://www.bv229.k12.ks.us/BVcurriculum/commarts>

<http://www.amazon.com>

http://www.create.cett.msstate.edu/create/classroom/lplan_view.asp?articleID=128#handout2