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# Black Angels



## Synopsis

The compelling story of three young orphans who must survive on their own during the Civil War. It's near the end of the war, and rumors of emancipation are swirling. Eleven-year-old Luke decides to run away to freedom and join the Union Army. But he doesn't find the Yankee troops he was hoping for. Instead, he finds nine-year-old Daylily, lost in the woods after suffering an unspeakable tragedy. Her master set her free, but freedom so far has her scared and alone. Also lost in the woods is seven-year-old Caswell, the son of a plantation owner. He was only trying to find his Mamadear after the Yankees burned their house with all their fine things. He wanted to be brave. But alone in the woods with two slave children, he quickly loses all his courage, and comes to greatly depend upon his new friends. In the chaos and violence that follows, the three unrelated children discover a bond in each other stronger than family. A touching, beautifully written narrative, *Black Angels* is a riveting, special read.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: HL690L (What's this?)

Hardcover: 272 pages

Publisher: G.P. Putnam's Sons Books for Young Readers; First Printing edition (September 17, 2009)

Language: English

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Product Dimensions: 8.5 x 5.9 x 0.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 10.4 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars 13 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #1,443,196 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #100 in [Books > Teens >](#)

[Historical Fiction > United States > Civil War Period](#) #1283 in [Books > Children's Books >](#)

[Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > United States > 1800s](#) #1533 in [Books > Children's](#)

[Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Friendship, Social Skills & School Life > Social Skills](#)

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

Grade 7 Up  
At the end of the Civil War, three children leave their homes and embark on a journey together. Luke, 11, runs away from his master to try and join up with the Union army.

Nine-year-old Daylily was hiding in the woods when her older sister and babies were killed by men she assumes are Yankees. Caswell, the youngest and the only white child, was left to fend for himself when his mother died on the plantation. Their paths converge, and these three unlikely compatriots head to where they think they will be safe. The story itself is somewhat contrived, and the violence these children witness is intense. Daylily's sister is graphically butchered like a hog and all of her babies are murdered as well. Scenes like this are sprinkled throughout the novel whether it is a situation they stumble upon or one that takes place in specific battle scenes. Both Luke and Daylily speak in dialect, as one would expect, but the dialect is not noted with any diacritical marks and is very distracting. Struggling readers will have a particularly difficult time negotiating it. The book ends with the three characters rendezvousing 10 years later, which serves to tie the story up in an unrealistically neat package. Carolyn Reeder's *Shades of Gray* (S & S, 1989) remains a perfect recommendation for showing the impact of the Civil War on children. —Joan Kindig, James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

"An unflinching look at how early childhood ended for children of slavery and the toll the Civil War took on all in its path." --Kirkus

I had to read this book for a school project and I was not expecting much from it. But as it went on it became an amazing book and I fell in love with the characters, and all the adventures that they went on. This is one of the best books I have ever read and I recommend it to every one that loves a good written story.

I found this book to be excellently put together. The story of three children left alone during the civil war, make their way north. They start out strangers and full of mistrust but end up as family. There are some battle field descriptions that may not be for the youngest readers. There are racial terms that may be offensive to some if the historical roots are not explained first. A great adventure story!

This book was a mixture of sadness and happiness. It made me cry over and over. I encourage you to read this book over and over again

I purchased this book for my grandson, I read the book and I am really happy I did, this is one of the most wonderful well written books I have ever encountered for young readers. I look forward to

reading other books written by this author. Dr. Welch

My niece said it was "really good and sad." She said she would recommend it to those interested in war stories.

"Black Angels" held my attention even though I am definitely not a young reader. The descriptions were sparsely worded but exceedingly vivid. I was particularly struck by the way Dr. Brown described the battle scenes. The approach through the eyes of children was unique. Brava!!

Three children, each with their own harrowing stories of pain and loss, find each other in the woods in the midst of Civil War terror. Luke, just eleven years old, is a run-away slave determined to head North in search of freedom. Daylily, two years younger, has just witnessed a brutal set of murders and is paralyzed with fear and shock. Little Caswell, the only white child in the group, lost his mother in the panic of an attack by Yankee soldiers and is desperately confused about where to go. As the oldest and equipped with a gun, Luke quickly takes on the role of leader and caregiver as he guides the other two through the woods in search of food, water, and shelter. As they struggle to overcome incredible danger, sickness, and hunger, they learn to love and trust not only each other, but also two women who serendipitously take on guardian roles in their journey to freedom and safety. Black Angels provides an eye-opening account of some of the traumatic aspects of slavery, the Civil War, and the post-war treatment of African Americans, as well as a story of how love and support help three children to navigate this trauma and grow stronger. Added to the mix are important lessons in economics related to scarcity, discrimination, and the institution of slavery. Some of the violent scenes make this book more appropriate for older children and young adults, who will undoubtedly walk away with a deeper understanding of the Civil War era and a stronger appreciation for social justice.

BLACK ANGELS is the beautifully-crafted story of three children - two escaped slaves and one lost white boy - on the run during the heart of the Civil War. Luke and Daylily seek freedom in the north while little Caswell just wants to find his "mamadear." With his home turned to ashes by the Rebs, Caswell's all alone - he has little choice but to tag along with the other children. Feeling responsible for his young charges, Luke leads them toward Harper's Ferry. It's a long journey, fraught with danger from soldiers, wild animals, starvation, fever, and so on. Each new adventure bonds the kids together until they've formed the strongest sort of family. Even in the enlightened North, black and

white children can never be brothers and sisters - after all they've been through, will Luke, Daylily and Caswell see their family ripped apart? Will any of them find the kind of world in which they long to live, the kind where friendship and love matter more than skin color? One of my favorite reads of the year, this is an unflinchingly honest, but tender story about courage, faith and friendship. It's engrossing, moving and memorable. I loved it.

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