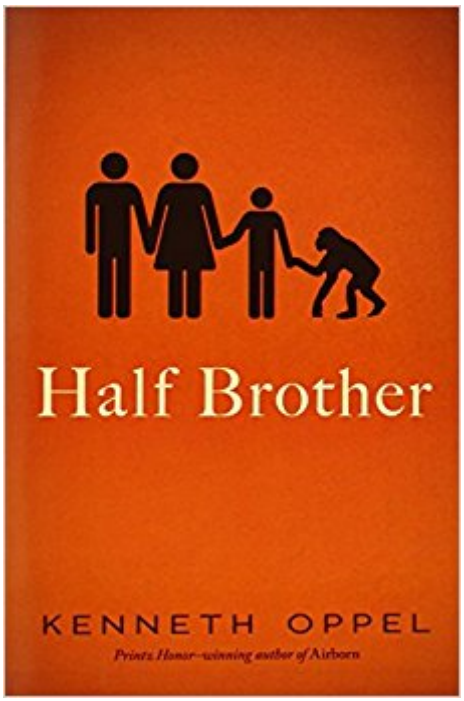
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Half Brother



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Synopsis

From a Printz-Honor-winning author, an absorbing novel about a teen boy whose scientist parents take in a chimpanzee.All happy families are alike. Ben Tomlin's unhappy family is unhappy in a very different way.For thirteen years, Ben Tomlin was an only child. But all that changes when his mother brings home Zan--an eight-day-old chimpanzee. Ben's father, a renowned behavioral scientist, has uprooted the family to pursue his latest research project: a high-profile experiment to determine whether chimps can acquire advanced language skills. Ben's parents tell him to treat Zan like a little brother. Ben reluctantly agrees. At least now he's not the only one his father's going to scrutinize. It isn't long before Ben is Zan's favorite, and Ben starts to see Zan as more than just an experiment. His father disagrees. Soon Ben is forced to make a critical choice between what he is told to believe and what he knows to be true--between obeying his father or protecting his brother from an unimaginable fate.

Book Information

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

Customer Reviews

Gr 7-11Ã¢â ¬â œThirteen-year-old Ben Tomlin's whole world is changing. His parents, research scientists, have moved them across Canada to be with their newest subject, Zan. Intending to prove that chimpanzees are capable of intelligent thought and communication, the Tomlins teach the baby chimp sign language and incorporate him into their daily lives. Thrust into a new school and,

essentially, a new family, Ben is caught in a whirl of new emotions, especially when the lovely Jennifer comes onto the scene. Though Zan learns sign language relatively well, his animal instincts gradually become more pronounced and Ben and his parents must make some important decisions about the chimp's future. Oppel has taken a fascinating subject and molded it into a top-notch read. Deftly integrating family dynamics, animal-rights issues, and the painful lessons of growing up, Half Brother draws readers in from the beginning and doesn't let go. The carefully crafted characters will be an easy connection for teens and the interpretation of the animal-testing controversies of the 1970s will provide an alternate viewpoint for animal-book lovers. Sara Saxton, Tuzzy Consortium Library, Barrow, AKÃ Â© Copyright 2010. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted. --This text refers to the Digital edition.

On BenÃ¢â ¬â„¢s thirteenth birthday, his parents introduce him to his new sibling: a hairy, swaddled baby chimp that will be raised as part of the family in an experiment run by BenÃ¢â ¬â„¢s father, a behavioral psychologist. At first, Ben resists calling Zan his brother, but as he begins to communicate with Zan through sign language, he develops a true, loving connection with the little chimp, even as he realizes that his father views Zan as just a scientific specimen. What will happen to Zan when the experiment is over? Best known for his award-winning speculative fiction, Canadian author Oppel tells a thought-provoking story set in 1970s Victoria. A few drawn-out episodes and a somewhat rushed conclusion result in some uneven pacing. But Oppel beautifully grounds larger philosophical questions about the deep, mysterious bonds and boundaries between humans and animals with BenÃ¢â ¬â„¢s coming-of-age concerns, including his first crush (whom he studies using scientific methods) and his acute awareness of family tensions, all narrated in his authentic voice. A moving, original novel that readers will want to ponder and discuss. Grades 7-10. --Gillian Engberg --This text refers to the Digital edition.

Like new condition! Great book!

Well written and an enjoyable read. I am sure that I have not yet gotten the author's message, if there is one, beyond life in a family. It is interesting to note that one of the narrator's complaints as an author is the liberties film makers take with a story when adapting the story to film, yet the movie of the book makes a number of significant changes, not the least of which is the ending.

Awesome book!!!!!!

Dear Mr. Oppel: Thank you for writing a book for young people that is not only informative; but funny, true to life and just down right good. I purchased this book for my 12 year old grandson for Valentines Day and I know he is going to love it. Joseph loves fiction based on fact and his teacher always enjoys his bookreports. I am also going to purchase a copy for his teacher to share with other students in the class. The author did a great job of getting back to solid educational topics and away from fairyland. Hurrah!!!!

I just recommended Kenneth Oppel's new children's book, Half Brother, to my 86 year-old grandmother. It is that good.I knew it must be good when I heard that Violet got in trouble at school for reading too much. At home I was envious of her complete absorption in the book, but also excited because I knew I would get to read it next. I asked her, "Is it `Hunger-Games-Good'?" She just grunted and waved me off. "Violet if you don't answer me I'm going to take the book away." She looked up at me and said, "Oh yeah, it's good. Can I just please read to the end of this chapter?"Later she told me she loved it because it made her feel like she was the main character, thirteen year-old Ben. When I got my turn, I felt the same way. Now I'm curious if my grandmother will feel likewise. Any book that can make a ten-year old girl, a forty-year old mother, and an eighty-six-year old great-grandmother feel like a thirteen year-old boy is impressive.There are stories that are compelling, and there are books that are insightful and complex. Half Brother is a masterpiece that combines the best of both. A page-turner for sure, we are dropped into a world of being new in junior high school while having a stormy relationship with a driven father. Just the thought of it makes most grown-ups cringe. Add on top of that the complexity of developing a close bond with a species so near to our own, but still clearly animal - and you have one of the best children's books I have ever read.I would not recommend this book to children younger than ten years old. The complexity of relationships might be harder for younger children to grasp, and there are some sexual references. The sexual references are not explicit, and they are appropriate to what a modest thirteen year-old boy would say and experience but some parents might be uncomfortable with younger children reading them. This is one of those books that would be a pleasure to read so you can judge for yourself.- Jessica

Book club choice for 11 + 12 year old girls. Slightly advanced reading level, but a great story. My daughter loved it.

Good read!

Good story, enjoyed this one

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