



Rampage at Waterloo

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- * WINNER of the Young Adult section of the New Zealand Book Children and Young Adults Book Awards
- * Shortlisted for the NSW Premier's Literary Awards
- * A Junior Library Guild Selection

Fifteen year old Willem lives in hiding in a small Belgian village on the edge of the great Sonian Forest. Willem and his mother have been living in secret for most of his life, since his father, a famous magician, fell out of favour with the French Emperor Napoleon Bonaparte.

It is a world not much different from our own, in which small 'saurs' are a part of everyday life. Some are farmed, some are pets, others, more dangerous are avoided. There are rumours of even greater 'saurs' roaming the uncharted islands of the Americas.

When a girl from the village is killed, it becomes obvious that there are hidden terrors in the forest and that they are connected with Napoleon's plans to conquer Europe.

But Willem has a secret that could interfere with the emperor's plans and Napoléon will stop at nothing to find him.

War is coming, and young Willem is no longer safe, for Gaillemarde is just a stone's throw from the fields of Waterloo -- fields which will soon run red with blood.

Rampage at Waterloo Details

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Author : Brian Falkner

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From Reader Review Rampage at Waterloo for online ebook

Katie Walton says

Finding Historical Fiction books for guys before they hit the adult shelves has been a bit of a struggle but fear not! Battlesaurus: Rampage at Waterloo is stomping onto the scene to solve that little problem.

Dinosaurs and warfare seems like a winning combo to me, and I'm sure some kids out there will agree.

The pace of this book is a bit slower than I would have liked. For that reason, this is not a good match for reluctant readers. That said, there's an audience of avid readers that love history and dinosaurs and they are going to eat this up and still come back for more.

Thanks to NetGalley, Brian Falkner and Farrar Straus and Giroux for the free e-Arc.

Heidi says

I'm disappointed, I was hoping for either awesome (Temeraire with dinos instead of dragons) or awesomely bad (can't look away from the disaster type horrible) and really this book landed somewhere in the middle. I was pleasantly surprised by the quality of the narrative, but still found myself disconnected from the characters and wishing the plot a bit more quickly paced. Decent alternative history, and a great premise that played out unexpectedly, but I don't think I'll be picking up the next.

If it interests you, I say give it a shot! I think this will work better for many than it did for me.

James Tullos says

My thoughts on this book can be summed up in one sentence: It made promises that it didn't keep.

Look at the cover, it's utterly insane in the coolest way imaginable. I was expecting a tongue-in-cheek, hilarious exploitation action story. Instead I got a teenage boy angsting about for 60% of the book and characters I didn't care about arguing for 30%. The last 10% had some cool dino action and even some horror aspects. Seriously, the sequence with the tyrannosaur in the village is one of the most intense I've read in awhile, and that alone elevates this book up a star. But most of the book is just boring. Not offensively bad, just boring.

While this book might seem like an opportunity to relive the battles you created between your toy soldiers and plastic T-Rexes, it's more like watching a bad Lifetime movie.

Hear all of my thoughts here: <https://youtu.be/oLR5ozg2kIY>

Becky B says

In a small village that can't decide whether it is Dutch or French, a mother and son have made their home for several years. They have changed their names and hidden their relationship to the famous conjurer Geert, because Geert made Napoleon rather angry a few years ago. Willem has grown up in the village, best friends with two cousins, Francois and Jean, who like adventure and a little danger. They do things like venture into the saur occupied forest to hunt raptor eggs. Willem has had a few brushes with the most dangerous of saurs, the firebird, and lived to tell about it thanks to conjurer tricks his father taught him that can mesmerize saurs. But then something new starts to pick off villagers. It's obviously bigger than a raptor and can climb so it isn't a firebird...what is hunting their village and where did it come from? Meanwhile, Napoleon has been sprung from his prison and is rallying his troops again, and the British troops have heard of this and are also gathering. And Willem will have to risk giving away his true identity if he wants to help save his village from the saur hunting it.

For some reason, I was under the impression this was a middle grade series. It isn't. The not so subtle hints that the mayor is sleeping around town with several wives other than his own, and the level of violence (think Jurassic Park + French Revolution scenes) make this definitely YA. I really liked the first half of the book which felt like a *Jurassic Park* set in the 1800s. The town residents have to deal with saurs as a normal part of life and figure out how to survive with them nearby. It was very fun. But halfway through there's a sudden major betrayal that came out of nowhere and that traitor continues to quietly hunt others they deem not worthy of living for the greater good. I would have been ok with this if there were some hints prior to that that this person had such fanatical political leanings. But nope. And so it felt like the author suddenly decided to throw it in with no build up and it was jarring, and it didn't feel necessary to the plot. There was plenty of danger and excitement without this. At that point we also spend more time with French and British troops, and there was a very weird 2 page description of the beginning of a battle as art-like which was weird and a bit sick (perhaps the author was trying to make a point of the skewed perspective of some crazy soldiers??). The story then goes on to have the village turned into a temporary war hospital so readers do get to see how ugly war is through Willem's eyes and survivors of a battle. Overall, I did like Falkner imagining what if dinosaurs were still around and were used in war, and the main character Willem is likable and noble (I also liked two of the British soldiers Willem befriends in the hospital, Lt. Frost and Jack), but I could have done without some of the unnecessary twists and turns. Trying to decide whether or not I'll read book two. Probably, but I feel no need to snatch it up right away.

Notes on content: About 4-5 minor swear words. No sex scenes, but as mentioned it is all but spelled out that the mayor is sleeping around with multiple women. It's also hinted that some of the girls go to other towns to make money in certain ways (though one is clarified that she "just" went to pose for artists naked). One brutal unforeseen stabbing by the traitor that comes out of nowhere. At least 5 different saur attacks result in deaths and some of those deaths are a bit graphically described. There's also a few battle scenes, with deaths described there. And then there's Willem helping the doctors remove arms, legs and such that are beyond saving after battles, which is somewhat described. Not for the faint of heart.

BB Christine says

Two stars for having a premise that's the only reason I picked up this book (dinosaurs at Waterloo!), and then

pleasantly surprising me with the narrative, even if the dialogue is cringe-inducing. It might have earned more stars had the author not felt the need to sprinkle bizarrely sexist bon mots throughout, like, "She begins to cry, a woman's trick to get her way when reason and logic has prevailed." Maybe the author stops doing this after awhile, but I won't be sticking around to find out. A premise that makes one smile because of its absurdity can only do so much.

Audrey Laurey says

At first I was hesitant, but this book is fabulous!! The combination of "saurs" and historical fiction was done in an awesome and not campy way.... which is probably hard to believe. I really liked the characters, adventure, danger, and suspense. I can see a lot of people getting behind this series, and now I want dinosaurs in all of my fiction.

Jillian says

Every so often, I am pleasantly surprised by a book.

Battlesaurus: Rampage at Waterloo had all the indicators of a beautiful train wreck. The cover image of a Napoleonic soldier riding a screaming T-Rex. The vaguely creepy red font used for the title. Heck, the title itself. It came across my desk at work as part of a crate of brand new books for high schoolers, and I didn't even let it make it to the shelf. This was going to be too much fun.

And it was...just in a different way than I expected.

It starts off slowly. The dialogue is stilted, since the author is trying to give the characters speech patterns appropriate for the time period. There's a weird "women cry to manipulate men" moment that comes out of nowhere. And the world makes no sense, but you just kind of have to go with it.

But the dinosaurs. Oh yes, the dinosaurs. There are little raptors all over Europe, apparently, but the big nasties live in America, which is entirely unsettled. (Because of the huge dinosaurs.) Except, for the plot of this book, somehow Napoleon has gotten his hands on a couple of them, and intends to use them to conquer the world. There's a night-time encounter with one of these monsters, and it took me back to the first time I watched Jurassic Park as a kid, peeking out from behind the sofa.

Brian Falkner is very good at building tension. Midway through the book, there's so much tension you feel like you want to burst – the Battle of Waterloo has come and gone (with dinosaurs!), our hero has a traitor in his circle of friends, the prisoners are in grave danger, and someone has to warn the English. He masterfully gets the characters into terrible scrapes and then somehow gets them out again without it feeling contrived. Even at the end of the book – only a handful of pages from the end – the group is in a real scrape and it's going to take a miracle to escape... Well, let's just say that I'll be reading the sequel, once it comes out.

Battlesaurus has something for everybody. You've got dinosaurs at the Battle of Waterloo. You've got stage magic and illusions. You've got daring escapes while being hunted by terrifying creatures. You've got murder, you've got treachery, and you've even got a little bit of romance if you squint. Overall, it's a fun read, so long as you don't want to take anything too seriously.

Things to know: Being a book with dinosaurs, there are definitely dino-related deaths. They are, thus, messy. There are other deaths as well – some are close-up, and some happen offscreen (though one particular instance of offscreen death is more horrifying than all the on-screen ones). There is marital infidelity, though there are no details. It's implied that one character is a prostitute, though her sister later says it wasn't true. There's also a few very suspenseful moments, so be prepared for a bit of "just one more chapter!" if this is a bedtime read.

Trevion Green says

[Willem and his mother live in a village hiding from Napoleon because Willem's father showed him a magic trick and was killed because of it so him and his mom went into hiding. (hide spoiler)]

Kathy Martin says

This alternate history story has the French winning the Battle of Waterloo because of their secret weapons - dinosaurs. Willem and his mother have been hiding in a small village since Willem's magician father angered Napoleon. Willem had learned a lot from his father and wants to be a magician too. He has a unique talent for taming the smaller saurs that inhabit the area and has used his talent on some of the larger more dangerous creatures too.

His talent has made him a special target for the French commander of the the dinosaurs. He doesn't want Willem to escape his control and share his knowledge with the British. Along with a blinded British officer and a British artilleryman who is caring for him, they need to get to the sea and find a way to get to England.

This story was filled with adventure and the sheer horror of war. The descriptions of the Battle of Waterloo and the horrific effects on the wounded soldiers was vivid and harrowing. Willem and crew's flight from the French was packed with action.

We also get to see what it is like for ordinary people when their country becomes a battleground the the rulers keep switching sides. The Mayor of their small town was a great example of someone whose loyalties shifted with every breeze.

I felt that the pacing of the beginning of this book was quite slow. There was a lot of setup before the action of the story really began. Once it did, though, the pacing got fast and furious. Fans of war stories would be a good audience for this one.

Ksenia says

This was a genuinely exciting read for me. I loved the politics involved, as well as the various characters, plus all the mystery surrounding a few of them. I really got into it. Adding dinosaurs to the mix just makes everything that much more brutal and scary. I'm curious to know how everything unfolds in the next installment. Seriously, give this one a chance! It might surprise you.

paula says

I can personally say nothing about this book, as it was snagged by my sons moments after it entered my house. Milo, who is 13, read it in an afternoon, giggling like mad. Then Ezra, who is 12, started it in the car on the way back from IKEA, and immediately began reading passages aloud to the rest of the family.

Given that kind of enthusiasm, I am willing to recommend it to other young people without even reading it myself. And I was told "5 stars!" by my frequently picky sons.

Bridget says

This was entirely too slow moving for my taste and also for a book with a MAN RIDING A DINOSAUR ON THE COVER. It's a very interesting premise, but I wasn't really engaged with the story until the last third, when the action picked up and there were barely any dinosaurs at all. Honestly, I'm mostly irritated that there's this fascinating story idea and most of the story focuses on the rather ordinary, if well depicted, military action and maneuvering. I'd give this to a reader who likes military historical fiction, but not someone looking for what the cover seems to be offering. It has suspense, betrayals, a hint of romance, and some gruesome wartime injuries, so if that's your cup of tea it could be a good choice. If you want a book with rampaging dinosaurs thwarting man, read Jurassic Park.

PS. Heloise is the best thing about this book, and if it had been her story instead of weinery Willem's I would have been on board immediately.

Sean Smart says

A fun read about a world where dinosaurs still roam the planet and how the French used them to win the battle of Waterloo. Not to be taken too seriously but well written and enjoyable

Paige says

3.5

This is the second book I read for Dinovember, and it was definitely my favorite of the two (I had too many issues with The Lost World). After I finished it I was like, I don't know if I have a good template for rating this book. The title is awesome. The cover is kiiind of amazing. Also, Napoleon's been breeding dinosaurs and he brought them to the Battle of Waterloo??? So I feel like this book had a lot to live up to. At the same time I feel like my expectations were on the lower side of things. I mean, the premise...it makes everyone laugh when I tell them about it.

The dialog was probably the weakest part, especially in the beginning. Maybe it actually got better as the book went on, maybe I just got used to it. The writing is nothing to call home about, but it is a young adult

book and I think I (like most people who pick up this book) was in it for the concept; I wasn't exactly expecting Donna Tartt, you know? And I think it was really well executed for what it was.

I thought that the way the author handles gender was fairly good. I was a little worried; taking a glance at a low rating before I read the book, the reviewer had said the author drops "sexist bon mots" and another reviewer mentioned the same line in the book—"She begins to cry, a woman's trick to get her way when reason and logic prevailed." And yeah, I agree, that sentiment is definitely objectionable; however, this is from the point of view of a teenage son whose crying mother is trying to keep him safe by telling him what to do, and a couple short paragraphs later we end the chapter with "It only occurs to him much later that maybe he has misunderstood the tears." I get the feeling the author wasn't endorsing the "women are crying manipulators" viewpoint, but rather that's what this male teen from 1815 thought, and even he eventually comes around to realizing he was wrong to do so.

Unfortunately the book is very male-centric. Almost all the characters are male, including the two main anchors of the story. The story is a boy's story from a boy's point of view in a boy's world and at times it does not really seem to give female characters full personhood; however, it is a little more complex than that too. There is a female character who is a bit more developed, and she's clever, good in a pinch, honest, can be kind as well as standoffish, and the hero of the book considers her to be braver than he is—and we get to see her being pretty rad, (view spoiler). The book also implies one of its female characters is engaged in sex work and says that "there was no shame in what she was doing" and has the main character verbally assert this belief as well. So all in all, yeah it's not super feminist or anything, but it's so easy to find a book I think is worse.

I am often disappointed by books that are in a series; this time, though, I was happy because it'll give me something to look forward to for next Dinovember.

Emily says

5th grade booktalk

Napoleon Bonaparte is quite possibly history's most famous short person. He famously conquered a lot of Europe, waged a lot of war, and lost pretty badly. In 1815, at the famous Battle of Waterloo, Emperor Napoleon suffered a crushing defeat – it was a turning point for his entire campaign. His defeat at the battle marked the end of his rule as Emperor of the French, and the end of his return from exile. The Napoleonic wars are an interesting piece of world history. But this isn't a world history booktalk is it?

This is a science fiction booktalk. So why am I talking about nineteenth century French history and Napoleon? Because. Because dinosaurs.

In this novel, *Battlesaurus*, the Napoleonic wars – specifically the Battle of Waterloo, Napoleon has a secret weapon. A giant secret weapon. Dinosaurs.

Now, don't get me wrong – I really don't want you to judge this book by its dinosaur. This book feels much more like a piece of historical fiction than it does science fiction – and were there not giant dinosaurs running around being controlled by Napoleon's troops and stomping on everything and eating people... it would. But this alternate history (a subgenre of science fiction and one of my favorite types) is definitely sci-fi – and it's definitely way cooler than the actual history. Because, DINOSAURS.

