



## Elixir

*Eric Walters*

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## **Elixir** Eric Walters

The latest page-turner from Canada's bestselling children's author. Twelve-year-old Ruth must spend her summer at the University of Toronto, where her mother is hired to clean the Institute of Biological Research. There, the lonely girl is befriended by Dr. Banting and his assistant Mr. Best, who are in search of a cure for diabetes. But much to Ruth's dismay, the research they are doing involves testing on animals. She's not the only one concerned about the dogs: a group of animal rights protestors become a regular fixture outside the institute.

When the group leader tries to enlist Ruth's support, she is torn between her sympathy for animals and her loyalty to Dr. Banting and Mr. Best.

## **Elixir Details**

Date : Published February 28th 2006 by Puffin

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Author : Eric Walters

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Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Fiction, Young Adult, Childrens, Middle Grade, Academic, Read For School

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## From Reader Review Elixir for online ebook

### **Lori Mezenberg says**

This book does a great job of representing both sides of the controversial vivisection debate, from the perspective of a young person so it is easy to understand....a great book for both kids and their parents to read and then discuss....by my own child's favourite author.

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### **Audrey says**

This is a thought provoking story on a controversial subject. Before 1921 anyone diagnosed with diabetes was given a death sentence. Dr. Banting was determined to change that. He began to do research in hope of discovering a cure.

Ruth's mother was hired to clean at the University of Toronto where the doctor and his assistant, Mr. Best were doing their work. Ruth spent a lot of time at the university and discovered that dogs were used for medical studies and lived in poor conditions. She became acquainted with Melissa who was a leader in an animal rights movement. Ruth also meets Emma who is dying because she has diabetes. Ruth is torn with the ethical dilemma of using dogs to save human lives. This was an intense story that was difficult to put down.

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### **Kayria says**

rating it with 5 stars because when I read this I was a kid and I love it.

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### **Westcoast\_girl says**

In Elixir, Ruth must spend her summer at a scientific research facility in order for her mom to keep an eye on her as she cleans the building. After her father died, Ruth's mother and Ruth have struggled to make ends meet. When a cleaning job comes up at the centre where Ruth's father used to work, Ruth's mother leaps at the chance.

Ruth soon meets Dr. Banting. He is a friendly man who helps Ruth with her dreaded spelling lists. Soon they are having tea together. Their friendship begins to build.

However, the friendship begins to get tested. Some strange protesters begin showing up outside the research centre with signs. They call themselves the Anti-Vivisection Society and they are protesting the use of animals in experiments. When Ruth sees a pamphlet from them, she is horrified. Could people really treat animals this badly?

It turns out, they can. Her beloved Dr. Banting reveals that his research on insulin requires the use of dogs. What should Ruth do? Should she believe the nice woman from the society or her trusted friend, Dr.

Banting?

This story explores the debate of animal testing. Both sides of the argument are well represented, using one of the most compelling cases in history: Dr. Banting and Dr. Best's use of animals in their discovery of insulin.

The book is both a work of historic fiction as well as a current event novel that illustrates an age old debate. As well as covering the topic of animal rights, Eric Walters also explores the age when women are beginning to gain equal rights and fight for them. Ruth's strong character demonstrates the courage, intelligence, and compassion a young woman can have.

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### **Athena says**

It is an interesting book. It helps you know the truth as well as adding fun. It taught me about insulin while satisfying my sense of adventure and action. The details were so exact that it was not very hard to imagine yourself in the places that the main character describes.

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### **Arianna says**

1.75/5

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### **Rachel says**

A great story about the discovery of insulin.

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### **Me says**

I love Eric Walter's books. I absolutely love them.

They cover such a diverse range of subject matter that it's amazing. It's not just the fact that there are historically-based books 200 years ago and very different issues today, it's the number of issues in each book. The back of this cover states that there is a conflict between medical research for insulin and animal-rights groups. However that's not all that this book is.

This book touches on many different subjects throughout the novel, many of which would be deemed 'too serious for the intended audience', yet in this masterful work they are acknowledged. You can't have a children's novel about dealing with dead parents, the difference between bravery and foolishness. Yet Elixir mentions these serious topics and brings them to life for children.

It's not too much. It's a tiny little mention here or there, which recognizes the issue and gives a lot of food for thought. It's not the juggling of too many topics that you lose track of what's happening where. In fact, if the main issue doesn't interest you, you can look at the other issues. It actually develops the characters very well.

Insanely well. The characters aren't just defined by the current issue that they're currently facing. Especially with WWI just ended, there's a lot of the character's lives developed around that. Each person has a story, and there's no shying away from topics because they aren't appropriate for children.

Eric Walter's books have actually raised so many un-answerable questions. It's absolutely amazing.

Especially since this novel is historical-fiction, we all know what happened: insulin was discovered. However if we didn't know this fact, would Melissa's protest stopped the research and then a future loved one of hers died from diabetes? Or would no progress have been made, and Sir Banting feel horrible because the dog reminded him of one of his own?

That bit with Emma, although necessary is very depressing especially since a little boy was the first to receive insulin.

Though I would like to point out one inconsistency. For the election during WWI, it was the first time women could vote. Only women who were wives, sisters, daughters to those in the war could vote. Borden got voted in, while everyone knew that he was campaigning conscription. So no Melissa, we will not vote to send our boys off to fight, we will vote to send off someone else's.

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### **Anastasia202 says**

Elixir is a wonderful novel where a young, 12 year old girl is forced to choose whose side she's on; the dogs or the scientists. Forever, doctors have been trying to find a cure for diabetes, a harmful and severe sickness. But the only possible way they can save millions of people is to test medical products on animals, such as adorable dogs and petite rats. Ruth is an animal-lover, but she meets a girl who is diagnosed with diabetes. Who is more important? Canine, who are man's best friend, or man himself?

This book will inspire people of all ages and get into their very hearts. Some moments in this book just force you to cry, while some let your heart shine and make you so relieved and joyful! I recommend this to everyone, especially those who have a soul (basically, everyone!). Not many authors and books have this much emotion mixed into words. Eric Walters truly has a talent to make people believe how it's always possible to do the right thing.

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### **Twyla says**

My favorite part of this book was when they finally found a cure for diabetes and the dog was saved. The worst part of this book is that the dogs got hurt

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### **Joanne L says**

I rated this book, 5 stars because I like how the main character learns something very important and tries to block away the bad people.

