



One-Eyed Cat

Paula Fox

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A Single Shot

Ned fired the forbidden rifle just once, at a flickering shadow in the autumn moonlight. But someone -- a face, fleetingly seen staring at him from an attic window -- was watching.

And when a one-eyed cat turns up at an elderly neighbor's woodshed, Ned is caught in a web of guilt, fear, and shame that he cannot escape -- until another moonlit night, come spring, brings redemption and surprising revelations.

One-Eyed Cat Details

Date : Published December 1st 2000 by Aladdin (first published 1984)

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Author : Paula Fox

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From Reader Review One-Eyed Cat for online ebook

McKinley says

I didn't believe this one. The characters aren't developed enough for the story to make sense. It's a book about too much without much being examined or resolved: remorse and grief, loneliness, chronic illness, bullying, etc. I don't feel it came together.

Twofrontteethstillcrooked says

I started a reread of this in honor of Fox's recent passing; it remains one of the best books I've read as an adult that I wouldn't have touched with a 900 foot pole as a kid. This speaks more to my essential awfulness as a child than to Fox's writing, ftr. This short middle-school novel is thoughtful and compassionate -- heartfelt without ever, for any length of time, feeling cloyingly sentimental in the least. It seems to me to capture, seemingly without effort, that essential feeling of being young-on-the-cusp-of-older, of being alternately bold or timid about one's own transformation from kid to teen (and beyond), our own failures, the strangeness of adults, the ways we're bound to other people, especially those adults we love, and the hard joys of living and dying.

So maybe, to be honest, I wouldn't give this to a kid to read even now, though I like to think there are at least a few who would in fact appreciate it as I am positive I wouldn't have. ;)

Kendall says

I thought if I kept reading it would get better... I wish I hadn't kept reading

Janet says

11 year old Ned gets a Daisy air rifle for a birthday present from his eccentric uncle Hilary. Ned's father, the Reverend Wallis, forbids him to have it and hides the gun away in the attic. One sleepless night Ned sneaks up to the attic and takes the gun outside into the night and its shadows. He sees something move, a flicker of moonlight, aims and shoots. Instantly he feels regret and goes back to his house, but is there someone watching from the attic window?

This was an interesting and mysterious story. I'm sure there is a lesson in there somewhere, but I felt the ending lacked closure. Still a good read for young and old alike.

Mellanie C says

I registered a book at BookCrossing.com!
<http://www.BookCrossing.com/journal/14792734>

Tracie says

I liked this book though the tone was melancholy throughout. I think it would be difficult to get kids to read this today; there isn't much action - except in the young boy's head. Essentially, a young boy whose mother is practically bedridden with rheumatoid arthritis is given a gun for his birthday. His father, a local minister, feels he is too young for the weapon and puts it in the attic until he is older. The boy cannot resist, sneaks the gun out late one night and probably shoots a cat in the eye. The book deals with his guilt over the cat and the boy's realizations about life and death.

Jeremy says

I currently temp at a hospital administrative building, so I don't know anyone and I'm not looking to forge any lasting relationships. This gives me plenty of reading time during lunches and breaks, and I limit my work reading choices to the paperbacks available in a plastic "take one/leave one" bin in my building's cafeteria, both because I know I'll forget or misplace any books I bring from home, and because I enjoy forcing myself to read material I might not normally gravitate toward in the face of wider options.

This is how I happened upon "One Eyed Cat", and it provided just the type of experience I was looking for when I decided on this method of reading at work. Quite simply, there's some beautiful writing here; nothing showy, no unearned sentiment. It's all very internal, so we're constantly privy to this pre-adolescent boy's perception of a variety of often traumatic events, and Ms. Fox manages to become the character as opposed to simply conjuring him for the approval of an audience. Though the prose manages to be both evocative and dead-on in its sparseness, not once did I feel as though I were reading what a middle-aged woman thinks a boy might wonder and feel about this and that.

A book for young adults written in 1984 may well turn out to be the most satisfying book I read this year.

Catherine Mustread says

Great book about suffering the consequences of one's actions.

Peacegal says

One-Eyed Cat is a fine humane education selection, particularly for public and school libraries in rural areas where a child's first BB gun is a rite of passage.

Despite being forbidden to do so by his father, young Ned sneaks out one night for some target practice with his new Daisy rifle. Without thinking, he fires at a creeping, shadowy figure. When he later spots a wounded cat who is missing one eye, the boy is haunted by guilt.

Fox explores big themes like taking responsibility for one's actions and the ways in which careless behaviors

can impact others in serious and unforeseen ways. All good stuff. She also introduces the idea that even the life of a skinny stray cat has meaning, and, to paraphrase an old saying, "the squirrel you shoot in jest, dies in earnest."

I couldn't, however, avoid picking up the irony of Ned's selective sympathy toward animals. While digging into plates of lamb chops or turkey, his mind is tormented by the thought of the cat suffering and dying as a result of his choices. The animals on the plate are just as capable of suffering greatly for our whims, but they are invisible to him.

Despite this oversight, *One Eyed Cat* imparts a message which still needs to be absorbed in many communities.

Sandra Stiles says

For his 11th birthday Ned's uncle gives him a Daisy air-rifle. Ned's father, a preacher, doesn't approve of the gun and puts it away in the attic until Ned turns 14. Ned has always been respectful to his preacher father and his arthritic mother. He has never really been disobedient, until now. He sneaks up into the attic and brings the rifle down. He just wants to fire it once and then he will gladly put it away. He sees a shadow near the barn and shoots. As he turns to go in the house he sees a face at the window. Was it his father, who would know that Ned had disobeyed? Was it snoopy, sour Mrs. Scallop? Could it have possibly have been his mother? Ned slips back into the house and replaces the rifle. Later when he is at his neighbor's house helping out he sees a cat with only one eye. Ned is sure that he is responsible for the injury. As life happens around Ned the guilt builds up in him. Who does he tell and how will that help now?

Luann says

This is well-written, but has such a sad, quiet guilt infused into the story that I didn't find it pleasant to read. Although I did really like Ned's neighbor, old Mr. Scully, and Ned's friendship with him. The ending is very sweet which made me like the whole book a lot more.

I never realized people could be so debilitated from rheumatoid arthritis. I felt sorry for Ned's mom. She seemed like quite the character when she was having one of her better days. I'd also never heard of gold salts (chrysotherapy) as a treatment.

Just a bit of trivia, I believe this is only the third book I've read with Turkish delight - the second being *Rebel Angels* by Libba Bray and the first being *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, of course.

Note: This was a Newbery Honor winner in 1985.

Richard Houchin says

This is the first book I can remember reading that I absolutely hated. I hate this book. It is seared, seared into my memory. If I could give it negative stars, I would.

Nathan Johnson says

This was one of the books that made me wary of trusting anything with a Newberry award.

I hate this book, it is easily one of the 5 worst books I have ever read.

The main character spends the entire book feeling massive guilt for something he isn't even sure he did. I felt little sympathy for his guilt in disobeying his father and taking the BB gun. I felt that his father was portrayed as rather overbearing and paranoid. Which prevented him from teaching Ned how to responsibly use his gift.

He was a stupid boy to shoot randomly at a shadow, but there is no good reason for him to feel such massive guilt when he is not even sure if he was the cause of the cat's injury.

The only redeeming part of the book is Ned's relationship with Mr. Scully. Unfortunately it is overshadowed by his ridiculous guilt for an injured cat.

There was a possibility for deep character interaction in this book, it was not there.

This is certainly no Old Man and the Sea.

Bonnie says

In my quest to read more Newbery Medal/Newbery Honor books I spied this book at the library and promptly devoured it. Just maybe the fact that it had "cat" in its title made me more apt to choose this one over another.

Neddy is the a son of a pastor and a homebound mother with rheumatoid arthritis before there were any medications for it.

The angelic father, the pious and unlikeable housekeeper/cook "He opened his mouth and she said at once, before he could speak, 'Calm down, calm down.' He hated the way she spoke in that false soothing voice, as if she owned the country of calm and he was some kind of fool who'd stumbled across its borders" and the pain-ridden but feisty mother, the well-traveled doting uncle who gives the boy a gun for his birthday (much to the chagrin of his father and pivotal to the story), the widower down the street who's been abandoned to old age creep by his daughter whom he helps with some light chores, and the one-eyed cat (that was just maybe shot with a gun) make up the world of this boy who lives in a cozy, idyllic house with the ubiquitous dusty, old attic where the gun is stored away from the boy.

LuAnn says

This hovers between 3 & 4 stars for me. Many kids would find this slow, but I find this introspective look at Ned's life from a 3rd person limited point of view well-done and realistic. I don't think adults realize/remember that many children who are taught values are very sensitive to their violations of those values, are fearful of being found out and live with increasing agony from the guilt. This book illustrates that

and so much more about Ned and his relationship with those around him. No one in this book is perfect, has a perfect life or has a perfect ending, which contributes to the realism.
