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Fireboat: The Heroic Adventures Of The John J. Harvey (Picture Puffin Books)



Synopsis

The John J. Harvey fireboat was the largest, fastest, shiniest fireboat of its time, but by 1995, the city didn't need old fireboats anymore. So the Harvey retired, until a group of friends decided to save it from the scrap heap. Then, one sunny September day in 2001, something so horrible happened that the whole world shook. And a call came from the fire department, asking if the Harvey could battle the roaring flames. In this inspiring true story, Maira Kalman brings a New York City icon to life and proves that old heroes never die.

Book Information

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Series: Picture Puffin Books

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Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars 91 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #4,843 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #1 in [Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > History > United States > 2000s](#) #4 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Death & Dying](#) #4 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Violence](#)

Age Range: 4 - 8 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 3

Customer Reviews

In relating the heroic role of the John J. Harvey on September 11, Kalman (Next Stop Grand Central) intelligently conveys those unfathomable events in a way that a picture book audience can comprehend. She begins with the year 1931, which saw some of New York City's finest hours: "Amazing things were happening big and small./ The Empire State Building went up up up." She continues with the completion of the George Washington Bridge, then zeroes in on the launching of the John J. Harvey, "the largest, fastest and shiniest fireboat of them all." Spot illustrations show its equipment and introduce the crew (including "a dog named Smokey, who did not put out the fires

but had many nice spots"), while views of the New York harbor stretch across a spread. She then fast-forwards to 1995: "New York was changing. The Twin Towers were now the tallest buildings in New York City." But the piers are also closing, so the fireboat rests in retirement. One night, a group of friends decide over dinner to restore the John J. Harvey to its original glory. Next, the volume takes an abrupt turn. White type on a black page announces: "But then on September 11, 2001 something so huge and horrible happened that the whole world shook." A sequence of spreads shows the towers literally exploding in dark, angry brushstrokes of black and gray and orange, followed by the many heroes who "sprang into action," including the John J. Harvey. With this inspiring book, Kalman (Next Stop Grand Central) sensitively handles a difficult subject in an age-appropriate manner. Ages 5-up. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

reSchool-Grade 3-Kalman's hip, high-energy paintings portray American life in 1931: the Empire State Building is constructed, Babe Ruth hits his 611th home run, "Snickers" is invented, and the John J. Harvey is launched to fight fires on New York piers. In its heyday, the boat is the *creme de la creme*, but toward the end of the century as the piers start to close, it is forced into retirement, soon to become scrap. Amazingly, a group of friends decides to tackle a restoration, and the John J. Harvey is called upon to fight its worst blaze ever. The fireboat's role on September 11 calls for a shift in the book's mood and style. The transition is signaled with a quiet page of white text on gray-no art. The spread of the expressionistic explosion is followed by portraits of community helpers. The climax is depicted on a black background with the firefighters, appearing as blue, kinetic outlines, furiously battling the blazing orange, red, and yellow flames with long lines of white spray. Fireboat does many things. It sets forth an adventure, helps commemorate an anniversary, offers an interesting bit of history, celebrates the underdog, and honors the fire-fighting profession. Children and adults will respond to it in as many ways. Wendy Lukehart, Washington DC Public Library Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

We own both the hardcover and the paperback version of this book. I first came across this book at Toys (backwards R) Us, and I, too, thought it would be a fun book about a fireboat. As my daughter was about 6 at the time, I eagerly bought this book based on the colorful cover and book title. I may or may not have flipped through it in the store. Even after I discovered that the fireboat John J Harvey (true story) 'came to the rescue' on 9-11, I felt this was an appropriate (and wonderful!) book

for my young daughter. When September rolled around, I asked her teacher if I could come read it to her class. It became a tradition, and although the task of reading it aloud shifted to her teachers and eventually my daughter, it was read every year up to her first or second year in middle school (and I think she even brought it in and read it during one of her high school classes). I wound up buying 2 paperback versions so that each of my children could share it with their classes on or around September 11th. I was thrilled when my youngest's 4th grade teacher was not only familiar with the book, but had a copy in her room and was planning to read it before I even brought it up. I have to say, even after all this time, I have difficulty reading it aloud without crying. While I chose to read it to my very young children, I would generally recommend it for 2nd grade and up.

When he was 2, our son saw a fire boat in a 4th of July boat parade. From that time on he has been obsessed. We found this book and ordered it, not realizing that the 9-11 subject matter was a little inappropriate for a 2 year old. Luckily, he couldn't read, so we just skipped the parts that he might have been confused or upset by. Now he is 3 and a half (a precocious, verbally advanced 3 and a half) He is tuning into the good guys/bad guys concept and is a little more aware of bad things happening, heroes saving the day, etc. We decided he was ready for this book as written. This is going to be a judgement call for every parent, but I think it's a great way to introduce the concept of 9-11 to kids when they are ready. Our son LOVES the John J. Harvey and the fact that the the good people who restored her have been able to use her to save lives. The story brings tears to my eyes but our son doesn't bat an eye. We would love to go to NYC some day to see the ship in person.

This was an awesome non-fiction historical account of a story from 911. It held the children's interest well. I read it to my granddaughter's First Grade class on 911. They were so enthusiastic! Asked lots of questions and had lots of thoughts about the book and the significance of the day. Only regret was that I found this book too late to order the actual book. Reading it in Kindle version on my iPad to a group of 20 was a bit difficult for everyone to see. A student teacher in the classroom pointed out, though, that by reading it on the iPad through the kindle app, I had introduced many of the students to a whole new option for reading books.

I teach 3rd grade and this read aloud helps me focus on what America stands for. That's what I need my kids to take away from such a horrific American tragedy.

Bought a couple of copies of this for something age-appropriate for two of our young grandsons (

one is five, the other six) with the 9/11 fifteen-year anniversary in mind. Read it myself in advance of giving it to them and really have to tell you that one illustration in particular just brought that day back to me all over again. It is written and illustrated in just the right tone, giving information and eliciting emotion without unduly frightening young readers. Beautifully conceived, highly recommend.

This is a wonderful story about the John J. Harvey. It includes the way the 70+ year old boat participated in the massive flotilla on 9/11 and then became part of the saving of Lower Manhattan on that day. Our family has a particular interest as my husband's grandfather, Fire Commissioner John J. Dorman commissioned the Harvey and his mother christened it. It is now in the hands of a great group whom you will meet in this charming book.

Read this book for the 4-5 year olds in a childcare and they wanted to read it again and again. I got home and order a paper back of this book and left it at the family farm for the school aged readers in the family. Then I liked it so much that I ordered another book, hard backed this time. The story is well written and the art work is attention grabbing and the kids love to point and laugh and are moved by the love the author had for his community. This is a wonderful book!

This was a gentle approach to introducing 9/11 to children. It opened many different conversations about not only 9/11, but also how we are sometimes led to do things for a purpose we may not see immediately. The owners of the fireboat bought it without the foresight that they would be involved in heroically saving many people. I see God's hand in how they worked to restore the boat for a bigger purpose than they could imagine! It was a lovely story.

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