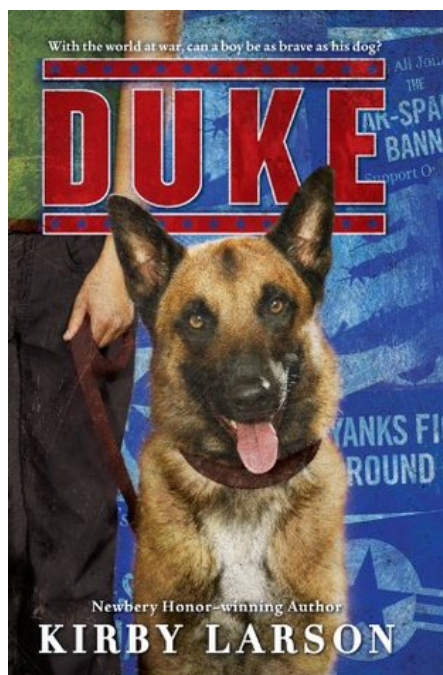




Duke

Kirby Larson

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Duke Kirby Larson

A poignant World War II story about a boy and his dog and his dad, and the many meanings of bravery, from Newbery Honor author Kirby Larson.

With World War II raging and his father fighting overseas in Europe, eleven-year-old Hobie Hanson is determined to do his part to help his family and his country, even if it means giving up his beloved German shepherd, Duke. Hoping to help end the war and bring his dad home faster, Hobie decides to donate Duke to Dogs for Defense, an organization that urges Americans to "loan" their pets to the military to act as sentries, mine sniffers, and patrol dogs. Hobie immediately regrets his decision and tries everything he can to get Duke back, even jeopardizing his friendship with the new boy at school. But when his father is taken prisoner by the Germans, Hobie realizes he must let Duke go and reach deep within himself to be brave. Will Hobie ever see Duke, or his father, again?

With powerful storytelling and gripping emotion, critically acclaimed author Kirby Larson explores the many ways bravery and love help us to weather the most difficult times.

Duke Details

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Author : Kirby Larson

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From Reader Review Duke for online ebook

Angie says

It is the height of World War II and everyone is being asked to do their part. Hobie Hanson is already buying victory stamps and collecting scrap metal. His dad is flying bombers over Europe and he is the man of the house. Hobie has a wonderful German shepherd dog named Duke that he adores. He is struggling with whether or not to donate Duke to the Dogs for Defense program. As soon as he lets Duke go he immediately regrets it, but there is nothing he can do to get him back. Duke is partnered with a marine and sent to the Pacific. At home, Hobie is dealing with the fact that his best friend has moved away and a new kid is being picked on for having a German name. Hobie has a lot of growing up to do and has to figure out if he is strong enough to stick up for what he knows is right.

I thought this was a book that kids will really be able to relate to. Hobie is just your average kid trying to do what is right and not always succeeding. He struggles with his mixed feelings about Duke and his inability to stand up to the local bully. I liked the fact that the story is based on real historical facts even though the characters are fiction. There really was a Dogs for Defense program where people could donate their dogs to the military. It must have been very difficult to let a beloved pet go to war and I am sure a lot of kids handled it just as badly as Hobie.

Evan Lien says

I've had this growing obsession with ww2 for a while, and it's only getting worse as I count the days until I get to see "Dunkirk". So in my quest to find the great ww2 fictional novel, I've sought out some children's lit. And while "Duke" is better than "Hitler's Daughter", It didn't quite give me the feels.

Sure, I did almost cry a few times during the letter sequences, I just had the feeling that there was too much going on behind the scenes, and too little going on in the actual novel. (i. e. duke's "letters" home, the teacher's husband, Hodie's (?) dad's situation ...) There just wasn't enough focus on one thing.

The crying mostly happened because I listened to this audiobook while walking my highly intelligent border collie mutt, Lucky. but yeah.

So Hodie lives in Chicago? No, seattle, during ww2. His father is in the army, and everywhere he looks, people and the media, tell him to "do his part". So naturally, he feels sort of guilty for not letting his pet dog go to war. Something makes him change his mind, and Duke is sent off. Hodie thinks it's okay, seeing as most army dogs stay state side, but Hodie's trained up duke so well, that he's eventually put with the marines in the pacific.

And here is where my problems with this book come in. No 10 year old can train a dog like that. Seriously. Ever seen a kid raise a dog? I have. The results were a toy poodle who had to be subdued so they could wash him. For a wash! They also had to be four people to cut his claws.

As to the author's fact-checking, it was okay, but I really have problems finding actual respect for authors who spew out children's books about the same subject each year. I don't know. I just know that as a kid, I would put this up against harry potter - and it would lose.

Mrs. Hornick says

WW? comes and everyone is told to pull their weight in helping America. 11 year old Hobie already has his

dad off at war, he collects scrap metal, he even is buying victory stamps weekly. What else can he do to help America? In the book, Duke by Kirby Larson, Hobie has a dog named Duke that he would never part with, so when people continuously tell him that Duke would be a perfect dog or the war, he immediately decides he won't do it. This is due to the fact that Hobie has no friends other than Duke, because his best friend, recently moved away. He soon decides that if he maybe gave Duke to the army that he would get his dad back quicker, but was he ever so wrong. Once he does this he immediately regrets it, mainly because now he has no friends and new bullies start to arise, picking on him for his German name.

Throughout the story the reader really sees how much Hobie struggles with these big changes. His family is really in two pieces, war, and at home. Not only Hobie is sad about these changes. His sister and mother are deeply sad as well. This is so hard for the family because they don't have all of the things they are used to. Such as family dinner, or for Hobie, walking Duke outside trying to find spare metal.

This book is suitable for all ages, but maybe not for people who don't like heart tugging books. People would also like this book to see what life was really like for people living on the home front of WW?. This book is also comical at some points, even though it is based on a sad topic. For example, when Hobie fights with his sister Jane, his witty thoughts in his brain are comical.

Faye says

Hobie Hanson is determined to do his part, he carefully saves his money buys war stamps to support the war that his father is fighting an ocean away.

After his best friend Scooter moves away, Hobie feels like his only friend is his faithful German Shepherd, Duke. But when he hears about Dogs for Defense, he knows what he has to do even if it means giving up the only friend he has left. But after sending Duke away Hobie comes to regret his decision and is determined to convince the army to send him back.

A compelling and endearing read, from Kirby Larson.

Ever since Hattie Big Sky I've been hooked on Ms. Larson's books, and with Duke she won me over all over again. Duke is a coming of age tale of a young man learning to live in a world in at war. Hobie, his family, and those around them have given everything to the war effort, all so that they can help their soldiers come home to them safely.

I loved how this book captured the feel of the 1940's, with the sense of community and friendship of a people who pulled together during a time of war, so different from today's reality. Hobie is a strong and stubborn young man, not without his flaws that only make him more relatable. Without Duke by his side, Hobie is forced to learn to deal with the world around him. One of my favorite characters ended up being June, Hobie's adorably persistent little sister. I also really liked Duke's handler, Marv who took the time to write to Hobie and let him know how Duke was doing, and his letters in response to Hobie's scheme to get Duke back always made me smile!

Overall, this was a terrific coming of age tale about a boy and his dog, set during WWII. I enjoyed it

immensely, and I really liked how good old fashioned values were present. This is a great book for all ages, it would be a great read aloud book, and it would appeal to both boys and girls alike, I also believe that adults would find this too be a very worthwhile and enjoyable read. I highly recommend this book for any age, and look forward to reading many more books from Ms. Larson in the future!

Disclosure of Material Connection: I received one or more of the products or services mentioned above for free in the hope that I would mention it on my blog. Regardless, I only recommend products or services I use personally and believe will be good for my readers. I am disclosing this in accordance with the Federal Trade Commission's 16 CFR, Part 255: "Guides Concerning the Use of Endorsements and testimonials in Advertising."

Brandon Bastar says

Personal Response

I liked the book *Duke*, by Kirby Larson because it gave great detail about all the emotions and feelings Hobie and June felt while their dad was at war. I think it was interesting that Hobie gave his dog away to the army. It showed that Hobie would do anything just to get his dad home and away from the war.

Plot

In the beginning of the book, *Duke*, by Kirby Larson, Hobie was going through a rough time since his best friend just moved to another state. The only other friend that could make him happy was his dog, Duke. His dad was off fighting at war, which made his life twice as hard. Throughout the book, Hobie wrote to his dad quite a bit. One day when Hobie and Duke were out on a walk, they ran into a man who recruited dogs for the Army. He told Hobie to think about donating Duke, because they were in a high demand for dogs at the moment. Duke was the perfect dog for the Army. Hobie decided to send Duke away to the Army but regretted it right away. He could not stop thinking about his dog and even wrote to Duke's army buddy to send him back. Hobie knew deep down that he would not get the dog back. Hobie and his family still realized that there was more to give than just a dog. There were a lot of other different ways they could help the Army. Hobie bought a stamp every day, so he could write to his dad. Hobie gave up his favorite parts of his life just so he could have his dad home from war.

Characterization

Hobie was the main character in the book. He gave everything he had to the Army so the war would end and his dad could come home. He bought stamps every day so he could write to his dad. Later in the book he even gave away his dog, who was his best friend to the Army. June was Hobie's little sister and she always was there to help Hobie out. Max was the new kid in school who was getting bullied, but Hobie helped him out. Mitch was the bully who everyone hated and later in the book broke the model airplane that Hobie made.

Setting

The main setting in this book took place in the United States during World War II. The time period was significant to the plot because Hobie did everything he could from home to help end the war. His dad was off fighting at war. He wrote to his dad all the time while he was fighting in Europe.

Recommendations

I would recommend this book for both boys and girls age seven and up, who wanted to know what it is like having a family member off at war. I recommended age seven and up, because that was the age when children could start to comprehend what was actually happening around them. The book gave great detail about how Hobie gave up everything he had for his dad, who was halfway across the world fighting.

Edward Sullivan says

A poignant, engaging historical novel exploring the themes of patriotism and sacrifice.

Alex (not a dude) Baugh says

It is January 1, 1944 - a new year and Hobie Hanson, 11, thought he was doing everything a kid his age could do for the war effort. He collected scrape; he spent 10¢ on a 'savings stamp' every week to put in his Victory book; he had watched his father go to war, flying B-24's in Europe; and now he had to say good bye to his best friend Scooter, whose father was needed at the Portland shipyard. So Hobie wasn't too happy when his neighbor Mr. Gilbert told him that his nephew had just donated his dog to the military's Dogs for Defense program and they sure could use a well trained dog like Duke, Hobie's German Shepard. But give up Duke? Never!

Not even when his favorite radio show, Hop Harrigan, talks about kids who have given their dogs to Dogs for Defense to help win the war. How could Hobie ever seriously consider giving up Duke?

When Hobie gets back to school after Christmas break, there discovers a new boy sitting at Scooter's desk. His name is Max Klein and the class bully, Mitch Mitchell, immediately starts picking on him because of his German name. Hobie just stood there and watched, wanting to avoid Mitch's meanness. But, later that day, it is Hobie's turn to get bullied after Mitch takes his bike. Only this time, he has Duke with him, who doesn't hesitate to go to Hobie's defense (no, Duke doesn't hurt Mitch). Impressed by what he sees, a man walking a Doberman, asks Hobie if he would be willing to donate Duke to Dogs for Defense, of which he, Olin Rasmussen, is regional director. Undaunted, as bullies often are, Mitch later tells Hobie he doesn't have what it takes to give up his beloved dog.

Challenged by Mitch, remembering his father's words about doing what needs to be done while he is gone, but feeling somewhat less heroic than the other Hanson men in his family, Hobie makes the big decision and before he knows it, Duke has left for basic training in the Dogs for Defense program.

Can he stick to his decision even after he learns that Duke is being trained for combat?

At first, I didn't care much for Hobie, but he grew on me. Duke is a story about bravery, and what that means for Hobie and by I finished the book, I realized that I liked the fact that Hobie's courage isn't perfect. He has conflicting feelings about what he has done and changes his mind about volunteering Duke to Dogs for Defense over and over, even trying to get him back. Hobie's is a very understandable wavering we can all relate to.

Like all good writers, Kirby Larson has done a lot of research to give Duke a sense of home front reality. As

she says in her Author's Note, she does not write books about war, she writes about people dealing with tough times, like war. Not only are her home front depictions believable, but Larson has also glimpsed into the world of soldiers and their dogs, through the letter Duke's soldier, Pfc. Marvin Corff wrote to Hobie.

I am always up for a good home front story about kids and how they coped in WWII, and Duke did not disappoint.

This book is recommended for readers age 9+
This book was an E-ARC from Net Galley

This review was originally posted on The Children's War

Alex Robinson says

This book is called Duke. I liked this book because it was emotional and unpredictable. This story takes place during WWII. It's about a boy named Hobie who loves his dog Duke. When he hears that the Army is looking for dogs to borrow he realizes that he should be brave like his father and lend Duke to the Army. The Army was looking for dogs to train to keep the soldiers safe.

I think that Hobie shouldn't have sent his dog Duke to the military because he loved him so much that he regretted sending Duke. The dog was always by Hobie's side and when a dog loves you that much you shouldn't send it away anywhere. Hobie also regretted sending Duke after he realized that Duke could be in danger, get hurt or die.

I recommend this book to mid-age readers because this book has very good detailing and history that would be better understood by older kids. I also think this book is for readers who like history books, animals, or have a family member in the military.

Joshua Adams says

In the book Duke by Kirby Larson Hobie loves his dog Duke. Hobie and Duke had an unbreakable relationship with each other and Hobie takes care of Duke everyday. Hobie is also going through some tough times with his dad in the military but Duke helps him through the times. While Hobie was walking Duke a man in the park noticed how good Duke was behaving and asked if Hobie's dog would like to help in the military. Hobie has some time to think about it and says he will let Duke serve in the military. Hobie immediately regrets his decision he has to wait a very long time for Duke to come back home but shortly after Duke comes home Hobie's dad returns home also.

I really liked the book but I would change one thing in this book. The one thing I would change is that Hobie's dad would return home with Duke. Other than that I wouldn't change anything else than that. This was also one of my favorite books and would read it again if I could.

I would recommend his book to 6th and 7th graders because it is about a kid in 6th grade. Also it tells you about unbreakable bonds between humans and animals.

Brenda Kahn says

A affecting story of a boy and his dog, or rather the absence of his dog when he decides to volunteer Duke for service in the military during WWII. Primarily a home front war story, the period is vivid with historical detail and Hobie is a likable main character aching with loss. A worthwhile addition to the collection

Laurie says

Booklist November 1, 2013 (Vol. 110, No. 5)

Grades 3-6. With a war sweeping the world in 1944, Hobart "Hobie" Hanson's father flies B-24s in Europe, his mother serves the Red Cross in their Seattle neighborhood, and his little sister knits socks for soldiers. But is the fifth-grader, as a popular war slogan suggests, doing all he can? When Hobie hears about the Dogs for Defense program, he "enlists" his beloved pet, Duke, to serve with the armed forces. Instantly regretting his decision, Hobie tries to retrieve his dog as he also contends with his father's uncertain fate, constant insults from the school bully, and risking his friendship with a new student of German descent. Letters sent from Duke (and his trainer, of course) provide updates on the canine and insight into this little-known band of four-legged soldiers. Larson captures the time period with pop-culture references, such as the Hop Harrigan radio program, as well as with the war efforts back home, such as saving cooking fat to make explosives. A good example of how bravery comes in all shapes, sizes—and breeds.

Horn Book Guide Spring 2014

With his father flying B-24s in WWII Europe, Hobie Hanson feels pressure to do his part. But when he volunteers his beloved German shepherd, Duke, for the new K9 program, he immediately regrets his decision. The time period, evoked through both product placement (such as Lux soap and Unguentine) and daily activities (such as listening to radio serials), unobtrusively frames this diverting read.

Horn Book Magazine September/October, 2013

Larson's two main literary interests (historical fiction such as *Hattie Big Sky* and informational dog books such as *Two Bobbies*) come together in her latest novel, set in Seattle during WWII. With his father flying B-24s in Europe, Hobie Hanson figures he knows all about sacrifice. He's got the responsibility of being, in the parlance of the times, the "man of the house," which means helping his mom, working on the family fishing boat, and taking care of his little sister. But posters of Uncle Sam exhort citizens to do more, and when Hobie learns that many on the home front are loaning their dogs to the new K-9 Corps, he volunteers his beloved German shepherd, Duke -- and immediately regrets his decision. He obsesses about getting Duke back, and when his dad commends Hobie for his bravery and for "putting others before yourself," Hobie knows that's undeserved praise. Besides trying every trick in the book to have Duke returned, he fails to stand up to the class bully or for a new friend. The novel's strong concept is greater than its execution. Foreshadowing is heavy, and the nautical similes are overdone ("That worry wore away at Hobie like salt water on a wooden hull"). But the time period, shown through both product placement (such as Lux soap, Barbasol, and Unguentine) and daily activities (such as listening to radio serials), unobtrusively frames this diverting read. *betty carter*

Kirkus Reviews starred July 15, 2013

With World War II raging around the globe, Americans are called upon to sacrifice everything, even when it might break their hearts. When fifth-grader Hobie Hanson's father leaves his fishing boat in Seattle to pilot a B-24 in Europe, he tells Hobie "to step up and do what needs to be done." Whether it is buying war bonds, collecting rubber or simply making due with less, Hobie is giving all he can to the war effort. But when he begins to feel the pressure to lend his beloved German shepherd, Duke, to the Army, Hobie realizes he still has more to give. Authentic details, such as radio drama, ration stamps and the ever-present worry of a telegram bearing terrible news, enrich this story of a boy and his dog. References to the Japanese internment and anti-German prejudice bring the war even closer to home. However, Hobie is no perfect hero. He wrestles with his decisions, making mistakes along the way; a refusal to glamorize war sets this story apart. The universal anguish Hobie feels in his sacrifice will touch readers struggling to make sense of their own losses. Exceptionally well-crafted and emotionally authentic. (Historical fiction. 8-12)

Publishers Weekly September 23, 2013

Life on the WWII home front is real and wrenching in this triumphant novel by Newbery Honor author Larson. Fifth-grader Hobie's losses are deep: his father is off flying B-24s in Europe, his best friend has left their Seattle hometown, and-after considerable anguish-he lends Duke, his German shepherd, to the military's Dogs for Defense program. Though distance separates Hobie and Duke, Larson reveals the bond between them as the ballast that keeps Hobie grounded and hopeful. Hobie answers letters from Duke's Marine handler (which are written mostly in Duke's voice) with misleading notes intended to secure his pet's release from service-until he divulges a critical fact that enables Duke to save lives in battle. Despite its finely detailed historical setting, this incisive tale of loyalty, patriotism, sacrifice, and bravery transcends its era. Ages 8-12. (Sept.) (c) Copyright PWxyz, LLC. All rights reserved.

School Library Journal October 1, 2013

Gr 4-7-A handsome German shepherd dominates the patriotic cover of Larson's World War II home-front novel, but the book's action centers on the dog's absence. Hobie Hanson, an endearingly earnest 11-year-old, loves his father, who is stationed overseas in the Army Air Corps, and his crackerjack dog named Duke. Determined to aid the war effort (and by extension his dad) any way he can, Hobie loans Duke to Dogs for Defense, a real-life organization that trained pets for the military. Larson weaves a wonderfully genuine attachment between boy and dog and thoughtfully examines Hobie's conflicted emotions as Duke gets partnered with a battle-bound Marine; fearful, proud, and lonely, among other muddled feelings, the boy guiltily schemes to bring his pet home. The author peppers the novel with charming period and regional details-who knew about Wheato-Naks cereal or the Seattle fishing fleet's annual blessing ceremony?-and maintains a fairly sunny tone despite the premise's potential for tragedy. Smaller-scale tensions fail to engage, such as bullying by a meanie and manufactured quarrels between Hobie and his new friend, Max Klein. Both side plots could likely be resolved with a swift talking to from the mindful, swaggering, baseball-captaining Catherine, who is clearly the character with the best head on her shoulders. Larson's tale succeeds best as a study of the home-front experience and a poignantly dogless tale for dog lovers.-Robbin E. Friedman, Chappaqua Library, NY (c) Copyright 2013. Library Journals LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Media Source, Inc. No redistribution permitted.

Julie says

Great historical fiction story about WWII. Would be a great discussion starter for bravery and the forms it can be found in. BEST of all...a dog story where the dog DOESN'T die!!!
Iowa Children's Choice nominee 2015-16.

Wendy Rollins says

Loved this book! Great for 5th graders learning about WWII. One of the 2015-16 Book Award Nominees (SCASL).

Tristen Wieters says

Personal response: I really enjoyed reading this book because it told me what it's like to be a young boy during WW2. I really thought it was sad when Hobie sent Duke away to Dogs for Defense and then regrets it. I was happy when Duke came home alive after Hobie was trying to get him back for a long time. I also still wonder what lesson Uncle Tryg learned when he got his arm caught in the winch on the Lily Bess.

Plot summary: In the beginning of the book, Hobie talked about what his dad did in the Air Force. His dad flew B-24s in Europe, fighting alongside all of the other men over there. Then Hobie gave Duke to Dogs for Defense and started receiving letters from "him" (it's really Duke's handler Marv.) Then in the middle of the book Hobie and his family found out that Hobie's dad took more missions to get home sooner to his family. Hobie made a model plane he sent to the war effort as a way of training men to spot airplanes by their shadows. Hobie and his friend Max found a dog they named Pepper, then Hobie tried to send her to DFD to get Duke back early. Max felt betrayed when Hobie did this and then left him at the baseball diamond. Hobie returned to Max to help him with his paper route so they could listen to Hop Harrigan on the radio and talk a little. Then Hobie found out his dad was a POW and wouldn't be coming home any time soon. At the end of the book Hobie and his family found out that the POW camp Hobie's dad was in was liberated and that he's coming home and so is Duke. Duke had taken a few bullets along with Marv but they both came home safe. Hobie and his family had a huge welcome home party for Hobie's dad and everyone lived happily ever after.

Recommendation: I recommend this book to males or females of age 10 to 150 Because it's a really easy book to understand everything that's happening in the book.

Kaustubh Dudhane says

"Are you doing everything you can?" Before reading *Duke*, I, like most of the other reviewers never knew that pets used to be donated during World War II. The contribution of pets (or K-9 troops to be precise) was enormous to the Allies cause in WWII.

The book is written from an eleven year old boy Hobbie. It depicts and describes the '*kashmakash*' of Hobbie's feelings towards his dog Duke, his father (who is a pilot serving in Europe) and finally his country. More often than not, the book brings tears. I could associate myself with Hobbie because I also had a German Shepherd called Dolly when I was a kid.
A must read for someone who had and lost a pet.

