



Learn Me Good

John Pearson

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Learn Me Good Details

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From Reader Review Learn Me Good for online ebook

Shilpa says

Aha! The book that I was sneakily reading when I was supposed to be studying for my university exams.. I remember my floor-mate giving me the *has-that-chick-gone-bonkers* look while passing by the place I was sitting and laughing my head off at apparently nothing in sight. Only after showing her my kindle app, she was convinced of my sanity!

Such perils of perusing this book..

So, be warned! ;)

Amy Bailey says

This was a choice for my book club, and I must say it was quite enjoyable. I think Mr. Pearson and I have similar senses of humor, so I took to this quite well. I don't see how one could be a teacher in this world without a sense of humor. At times I found myself laughing out loud at some of the anecdotes. That being said, I do feel there were some serious points being made, especially about the intense way in which an over-testing environment can stifle the thorough education of our children. Does the stress of too much standardized testing help or hinder both students and teachers? Anyone with a brain can figure out the answer to that question. Unfortunately, there's a lack of people with brains who are actually making these decisions. That being said, the hints to this were more subtle and it wasn't preachy. Overall, very enjoyable and I look forward to reading the follow-up.

Cheryl says

After each email ended, I was faced with a conundrum: keep reading on or stop and save the rest for later, savoring each email like a piece of fine chocolate. I wanted to keep reading on, but didn't want this book to end!

I stumbled across this book as I searched for books with the same themes as mine (humor, education). The book preview was enough to convince me to buy the book--I liked the author's style of humor and the writing was good.

This book is hilarious! I especially like how the author uses references from previous chapters in subsequent ones, adding to the comedy by making the reader feel like a story insider.

I have so many favorite lines, but I think "Calls me Ishmaels" takes the cake! I hope this author writes more in the future!

Claudia says

Fun, true-to-life, with an authentic voice. Often I get impatient with first-year teachers' memoirs...too cute, too smug...too Esme. But this is a hoot. Maybe it's because it's written as emails to a friend--a snarky friend. Pearson entered teaching after he was laid off at his old job. But I never doubted his six city and commitment

to his students...

His stories about his students are ones every teacher can smile at, nod his or her head at....we recognize his fear of parent conferences, his sick humor, his frustrations over the testing culture...

The book covers Pearson's first year, ending with the month-long testing frenzy that is Texas third grade...he covers the seasons, the celebrations, the revolving door that public schools are...kids in and kids out...one girl entered his class the day before the testing, and he was held responsible for her scores...

His affection for even the most challenging kids is clear, his desire to be a better teacher is evident. I really like Jack Pearson!

Judy says

John Pearson earned a degree in Engineering from Duke University and then worked for nearly four years in Dallas, Texas as a thermal design engineer before being laid off. He decided to go back to college to be certified as a math teacher and found himself at the beginning of the next school year standing in front of a class of 3rd graders in an inner city school as their Math/Science teacher. This book is the journey of that year of teaching told through a series of emails to his friend, Fred Bommerson, who still worked at Heat Pumps Unlimited. The emails are full of sarcasm, a touch of despair, a huge helping of tenderness and respect, humor, and, ultimately, a lot of love. Pearson comments that he traded in conference calls, product testing, and business cards for parent-teacher conferences, standardized testing, and report cards while noting that the maturity level of the people surrounding him didn't significantly change. After reading about the 40 3rd graders that Pearson taught every day--two sections of 20--I was amazed to discover that they reminded me quite strongly of the college students that I teach (harass, conjoin, perform for, etc.) every semester. His third graders have the same limited attention span, urge to get off subject, lack of respect for authority, behavioral issues, family problems, procrastination, and indifference to detail (wait, I have some of those qualities too) as my college students and I have the same affection for my students as the author has for his. While students of any age can drive educators to distractions (and sometimes substance abuse) there are those moments when you realize why you gave up the big bucks to spend your time in the classroom. One of my favorite moments in the book was the last day of school when all of the students are on the buses pulling out of the school and the teachers "were waving, clapping, dancing, and shooting off pistols into the air. I think that I even saw someone hold up a sign that read 'John 3:16'." And then comes the realization that he's already looking forward to the next school year. I know the feeling.

Celia says

Storyline: What can I say about Learn Me Good by John Pearson other than it really are good?! It's better than good; it's gooder even! Mr. Pearson's hilarious book chronicles his first year of teaching through a series of emails to a former coworker. It almost makes me want to be a teacher. Almost. Jack Woodson was laid off from his engineering job that he worked at for nearly 4 years and decided to become a school teacher. After all the necessary tests, certifications and teacher's training, he is now a brand spanking new math and science teacher at a Dallas area school with his very own class of 3rd grade students to mold into future world leaders.

Jack decides to share his day to day adventures and misadventures with a former colleague at the thermal design firm that laid him off. Learn Me Good is based on actual events. The names of the parties involved

have all been changed to protect the innocent and deter the guilty from being too proud of their “accomplishments.” Jack pokes fun at his old coworkers, even comparing their maturity level to that of the 3rd graders he teaches and all the while, sharing anecdotes about the 8 and 9 year olds’ views on life, liberty and the pursuit of recess.

Grammar/Spelling: I did not notice any grammatical or spelling issues. (As to be expected, I mean, Mr. Pearson IS a teacher!)

Character Development: There were plenty of characters and plenty of character development. Mr. Pearson navigates through the first year of teaching with an ever-changing cast list in his class and a consistent group of players back at his old job. I could go on for ages about each character, but I’d not only be stealing Mr. Pearson’s thunder, I’d also be doing him a disservice with simple summations of each person’s integral part in the overall experience.

We have Marvin: the ultimate example of how ADHD cannot be “cured” with simple medication. He means well, he’s just...how do you say? Exuberant? Full of life? Yeah, that’s it. Marvin is a simple soul who sees the world as it is: in shades of “I didn’t mean to...”

Thompson is an aspiring rap star and dresses the part – in miniature, of course. He is subject to sudden and intense “rap attacks” when he pops, locks and lays down some serious (if inaudible) lyrical genius. At times, he even borrows verses from other lyrical geniuses – even if he doesn’t quite know what all of the words mean.

Then we have hapless Larry: one of Jack’s former coworkers and the butt of nearly any and all of Jack’s jokes both in these emails and when he worked with him. There was even a prank involving Larry’s unattended computer, a picture of the boss and an audio file set at full volume. I’ve been a witness to that sort of joke before. Always a good time for nearly all parties involved!

Writing Style: The writing style was straight-forward and full of laughs. At times, I could read between the lines and feel some of his frustrations with the entire standardized testing system; but, I could definitely see that he genuinely cared about his students’ successes and failures.

Continuity: No issues with continuity.

Overall Rating: 5+

Learn Me Good was practically impossible to put down, hilarious and pretty inspiring. Just when I was fairly certain that our public school systems were full of teachers that don’t care and are just focused on standardized testing, Mr. Pearson proves that there are at least a couple who strive to go beyond the dreaded test. There were numerous times when I threatened to spit water out onto my keyboard when reading it. (“Yes, Generic Student?”)

I hope that Learn Me Good is the first in a series of hilarious school year stories. I could read these for DAYS. Or, if not a series, at least it will be the first of many great books to come from the very talented Mr. John Pearson.

Anyone with a child, anyone who works with children or has worked with children in the past or is planning on working with children in the future or, heck, anyone who can read at nearly any level, should read Learn Me Good! There is simply a lack of any good reasons not to read it!

Bridget says

What a quick & fun read. I laughed out loud at something in every chapter. If you are a teacher or know one it's a must read. And if you're not, it's still a must read if you are looking for lighthearted escapism. I especially loved the great puns (is the term great puns an oxymoron?). Do yourself (and the author who is really a 3rd grade teacher) a favor & buy this book.

Deanna says

Learn Me Good is an often laugh-out-loud, 'probably-true' story of an engineer who loses his job and ends up teaching 3rd grade math in Dallas, TX.

The book is presented as a series of emails that Mr. Wooden...uh, Woodley...errr...Woodson (read the book, you'll understand that part) sends to a friend at his prior employer about the kids he's teaching and the crazy things they do and say. It's worth the small price of the book just to read the subjects & clever names with which he closes every email, I found myself snickering at several.

I've never raised or worked with children, so I don't read this genre (and wouldn't have, had I not read about it on the Kindle Boards), but I laughed loud enough to startle my dog a few times and found most of the stories to be at the very worst, amusing. Most people who have had or taught small children would get quite a kick out of it.

The author states up front that he's changed all the names and that 'most' of the incidents he recounts are true, lol. The book is a quick, easy read and the author's love of his new-found profession comes shining through in this light-hearted book. I finished it in two nights, which could have been one if I weren't so busy. The book is about 55,000 words. I'm not sure how many pages that translates into, but it's definitely novel-length.

A note about the Kindle edition: I didn't find any typos or grammatical errors (none that weren't intentional, lol), just a couple of odd line breaks. Formatting for Kindle isn't easy. I didn't find them too distracting & they don't warrant a reformat, in my opinion. To those who worry about errors taking away from the enjoyment of an ebook, you can feel confident in buying this book, it won't disappoint.

Candy says

I am almost ashamed to say I purchased this book 15 months ago on my Kindle 2 during a buying spree, it quickly got lost. I found it again when the Kindle 2 got collections, but it quickly got lost in the "memoir" collection. I found it yet AGAIN and made myself promise to read it when my Kindle 3 came in, even making a special category for "read now" that has less than 12 books in it. So, I finally read it. I think part of my hesitation is that good self-published memoirs are rare, fabulous self-published memoirs appear to be non-existent.

I went into this one not really knowing what to expect. My husband is currently in the midst of a career change at the age of 30-something himself - into teaching, of course. He substitutes so I hear all the stories, etc. Going into reading this particular book, I wasn't really expecting too much difference.

Oh.My.Goodness.

I don't think I've laughed so hard at a book all year. This is seriously one of the funniest books ever. Yes, it was heartwarming, etc etc. Whatever. It was downright funny. The author has this wry dry sense of humor that just left me doubled over. I think I even peed myself a little a few times. My husband asked several times if I needed some water. I'm talking big tear-streaming laughs. The dude is funny. The best part? It's all told through emails to his buddy from the job he got laid off from (almost) 4 years prior. So you can just see the friend on the other side wondering what in the world John has gotten himself into.

What's more... the book felt real. I kind of want to adopt John and make him come teach at my kid's school here in Austin (he's apparently from Dallas, hey, it's not that far! - is that stalkerish?). Then I want to invite him for dinner (that's not weird, is it? wait... don't tell me) and have some really good laughs with the guy. He is funny, yes, but he's also genuine. His love for those kids shows through on each page, even as he's calling them the demon spawn that they are. Okay, maybe not that MP kid, but hey...

There's one part of the book, and I won't post it because I don't want to give any spoilers. I really really want you all to go read this book. It's fabulous. But there's a part where he makes a comment that really almost made me tear up (and not from laughing). It makes me realize that this author has found his calling in teaching - and perhaps in writing too. To him, I have nothing but respect. Writers always get my respect... teachers, well teachers get my reverence.

Good for him. And good for me too. I've not been touched by a single off-the-hip passage in a very long time, especially not in a hilarious memoir such as this. This was also very well put together and it had all the essential parts of a memoir for me. SO many don't have redemption at the end. And I don't mean that all of them are drug memoirs and they find themselves either - there's different kinds of redemption and I really like to think that Mr. Pearson found it in himself as well, maybe even while writing this silly little book.

I recommend this book for anyone that loves reading about the crazy things kids do and for anyone that likes memoirs in general. This is one of the very few that are going on my "must read" list this year.

Karista says

I really enjoyed this book. It is a quick, humorous read that is easy to relate to, even if you have no teaching experience. I would read just a couple chapters each night for the humor and heart that came out through the delicious snarky and witty commentary. My personal favorite was "yes generic student". I also looked forward to the fitting pen name after each letter. I've read the sequel Learn Me Gooder and it is just as "good".

Arni Vidar Bjorgvinsson says

The premise of the story may not seem overly interesting at first glance; an engineer starts working as a teacher and tells the reader about his experience with the children he teaches. And this is definitely not my regular type of reading material, seeing as I prefer fantasy over reality.

That being said, perhaps because I wasn't expecting anything, this book just blew me away. Although mostly reading it in bed at night, with marginally half a brain running and thus barely 1/10th a sense of humor, I found myself laughing out loud again and again.

Getting to know 'his' kids in such a wonderfully quirky fashion, following the struggles and hardships of

these kids as they attempt to master the miracle of reading and math, is nothing but pure joy! Then there are the phrases... stuff too weird to come from any but 3rd graders... some of those lines are simply insufferably cute and wonderful and horrible to behold.

I have the deepest adoration and respect towards people who decide to become teachers for the right reasons, and from reading the book I believe that 'Mr. Wooden' is such a person.

Very much looking forward to the sequel!

Liesl says

A quick and enjoyable read. The epistolary style both helps and hinders the book; it creates a unique feel that allows for an intimate look at the author's experiences, but after a while the format feels forced, especially since Pearson insists on starting each email passage with an awkward paragraph summing up the correspondence from his friend and former coworker instead of merely including the message itself to strike a more conversational tone. As I read these various tales of a first year teacher, many of my own teaching memories came flooding back to me, and I both related to and sympathized with the situations included here. Although the tone is not as humorous as I had been led to believe, Pearson's account provides a valuable look into the world of public education for those unfamiliar with what the field and a position within it truly entails. Teaching is no joke!

TC says

This book takes the form of a series of emails from Jack Woodson to a former colleague, Fred. Jack was made redundant after nearly 4 years at a thermal design firm, and decided to retrain as a teacher. The emails cover his first year as an educator, teaching 3rd grade and while names have been changed to protect the innocent the emails are based on real experiences.

The format of the book meant it was a nice easy read, with the emails creating an equivalent to short chapters. It would have been a nice book to have dipped into when I only had a bit of spare time to read, but in reality I read this over the course of two afternoons.

Due to the nature of the book, while we learn a bit about the background and physical attributes of Jack and some of his class and colleagues, this isn't really a character driven book, it's more of a literary sit-com. There are plenty of anecdotes about what his charges have said or done, and his responses to them. Some of the stories are so shocking you have to laugh and others must have bemused Jack as they certainly puzzled me. It is certainly a funny book and I found myself chuckling quite a lot. However I am also now in a state of fear. What starts in the States often makes it's way to this side of the pond, so I guess by the time my little one starts school I'll have to buy gifts for teacher for all sorts of occasions with no relation to education.

Quips aside it was also interesting to find out incidentally about some of the issues facing urban schools. I suspect a lot of the issues are the same here as in the US, such as teaching kids for whom English isn't a first language and endless testing. Don't expect serious debate though, this is a light hearted, irreverent book that suited my need for a short, humorous read perfectly.

Niki says

A quick and light-hearted read, though hindered by its awkward epistolary format. I enjoyed Pearson's humorous pratfalls as he navigated through his first year of teaching - particularly when it came to dealing with the antics of his third grade students. However, the one-sided correspondence made for weird summations at the beginning of each entry. Why not just include short replies from his friend right alongside his own letters? His friend's observations about the children's crazy behavior might have added more dimension to the adventures. And goodness, some of those kids really were Holy Terrors! It's been over ten years since the first release of this book, and I can't help but wonder where some of these kids are now?

Sheryl says

This book is entertaining even if you aren't a teacher. I am not a teacher nor have I worked in an elementary school but I still thought this book was very funny. Told entirely in emails from a first time teacher in an inner city Texas school to a friend and ex-coworker, "Learn Me Good" is wickedly entertaining and clever. It's not just the stories he tells but the way he tells them that make this book so funny. Be prepared to laugh out loud.

Since it is told in a series of emails of varying lengths, it is easy to read in bits and pieces (like I did), if you are not so inclined to read it all at one time. While it could be a quick read, I chose to spread it out over months, reading an email or two here and there in between other books, while I was waiting at a doctor's office or other times when I just didn't feel like I had the time to invest in whatever novel I was currently reading. So, even if you don't have a lot of time to read, don't let that deter you from picking up this book.
