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Under An Eagle's Wing: The Story of An Orphaned Vermont Boy

Barbara Williams Sheperd

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Set in Bethel, Vermont during the 1920s, Under An Eagle's Wing is a humorous and poignant story of a young boy who is left at a Montpelier orphanage, and later taken by a farmer and his wife to their home on Camp Brook and raised with other orphaned boys. Killing Mrs. Rogers' prize rooster with a sling-shot is the first of many adventures and pranks. But, it is a barn fire that breaks out after Arthur is smoking in the hayloft that shows him the true meaning of family. In Under An Eagle's Wing we see what happens when Arthur is teased his first day at a one-room schoolhouse, meet his little sister Mabel, and have an adventure riding a traverse. We are with him as Christmas brings both heartbreak and unexpected kindness. We are in the sugar woods when Arthur drives the horses to collect sap and learns how to make maple syrup. We see him through his first crush, experience a small town Fourth of July celebration and an attempt at riding a bull. And, we weep with him as without a word he endures Mrs. Rogers' cruelty. How close did Mazie come to being baked in the oven with the potatoes? What advice did Dr. Allen give Arthur when he ran away from home? What did Arthur learn from his summer living in the woods with his father when he was sent away? How did Arthur save Mrs. Rogers from the barn fire that broke out after he was smoking in the hayloft? And, who is the Eagle? Under An Eagle's Wing tugs at the heartstrings as it casts a spotlight on a child who is trying to find his way in a world where he is special to no one. Based the life of Edward Williams, stories he told and his audio-taped memoirs, it gives readers an enjoyable and informative look at what life was like when their great-grandparents were young. It is fully researched and historically accurate, right down to the name of the train and the time it stopped in Bethel. WHAT READERS SAY: Very powerful and touching. A charming and delightful narrative! There are so many beautiful sentences; and there are places that make you laugh, and then the next sentence breaks your heart. Your writing is spare, to the point and brings Arthur immediately to the front of the story. I can hear, see, smell and almost taste the food in this story. You seem to have beautifully captured farm life in rural Vermont. As a former middle school teacher I thoroughly enjoyed your story. The book is excellent! It really captures the reader's attention. I found myself wishing there was more once I finished. I wanted to share with you how moved I was by the story and how much I enjoyed it. You truly are a remarkable writer. Once I started reading it, I didn't want to stop. I actually teared up at the end, (and in another place or two). Arthur and the other characters are very alive and well developed. The details of the time period are magical. AUTHOR NOTES: I am, first and foremost, and educator. I worked thirty years in Vermont schools, five as a classroom teacher and twenty-five as a middle or high school counselor. Like any author, I'd like to hit it big. But, more than that, I'd like to preserve our history and have a hand in educating children about life in the early twentieth century. I have dreams that my book will become a part of a school curriculum and be enjoyed by thousands of children. I dream that libraries will stock my book, and that children will laugh, and cry, and learn, and wonder, (and hide under a blanket with a flashlight reading it), after Mom or Dad hollers light's out! FOR EDUCATORS: Under An Eagle's Wing will compliment the study of 20th Century history in an elementary or middle school. The following themes in the National Standards For Social Studies are addressed: Individual Development and Cultural Identity Development, Movement, and Interaction of Cultures. Geography, Humans and the Environment Development and Transformation of Social Structures Civic Ideals and Practices Creation, Expansion, and Interaction of Economic Systems

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