



## Meely LaBauve

*Ken Wells*

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## Meely LaBauve Ken Wells

Fifteen-year-old Meely LaBauve is growing up on Catahoula Bayou and living by his wits. Not since Huck Finn rafted down the Mississippi has there been a coming-of-age story like this, told in such an utterly authentic unlettered American voice. From a charming encounter with first love in the Canciennes' corn patch to an adventurous paddle through wild and timeless places little explored, Ken Wells has cooked up a zesty gumbo of a book--rich, poignant, and often hilarious.

\* An American Library Association/YALSA best book of the year

## Meely LaBauve Details

Date : Published August 14th 2001 by Random House Trade Paperbacks (first published 2000)

ISBN : 9780375758164

Author : Ken Wells

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## From Reader Review Meely LaBauve for online ebook

### Patty says

*"Daddy ain't a bad man, least I don't think so, though some folks might argue with that. He says the law's just decided to git on him and when the law decides to git on you, it's like fleas on a hairy ole dog. You cain't git 'em off."* p. 45

I had fun reading about Meely. He is quite a character – one that I would really like to meet. Wells has written an funny and touching story about the world that he knows best. According to his web page, "Ken Wells is a journalist and novelist who grew up in Cajun country on the banks of Bayou Black, La., about fifty miles southwest of New Orleans. His father was a part-time alligator hunter and snake collector and full-time payroll clerk for a local sugar mill; his mother a homemaker and gumbo chef extraordinaire."

Having a father who hunts alligators sounds like a great start to a good story. How could you have a dad who does that and not want to write about his life? However, I am guessing that Wells' dad did not have the adventures that Emile, Meely's father has in this novel.

Meely has been compared to Huck Finn and that may be an apt description. Fortunately, Meely is more than a clone and his uniqueness and independence are his best assets.

If you are looking for an entertaining, short read that has good characters and a wonderful setting, you should try reading **Meely LaBauve**>.

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### Matt says

I fell in love with Ken Wells' characters with his most recent book, "Crawfish Mountain." So, I am now reading his first. It's a bit obvious that this is his first. The book is told in the first person by a 15 year old semi-orphaned boy who lives in a shack in the bayou and has to hunt or catch everything he eats. His father is an alligator poacher who only occasionally returns home to "romance" a woman. The youthful patois, in which the whole story is told, can be misread as poor writing. However, the everyday adventures harken to a modern day Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer story. All-in-all a fun quick read.

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### Brenda Ware Jones says

A friend lent me a stack of 3 Ken Wells books, so I started with this one, out of politeness but with little interest. I was a tad put off at first by the first-person, dialect format--in this case, Louisiana swamp Cajun with a lot of pidgin French thrown in. It's a hard style to master, and I kept waiting for it to turn into a baaaad imitation of \*Huckleberry Finn.\* 'Long 'bout page 25, I wuz hooked like a \*couillon\* on a cane pole! Couldn't put it down, and read it all in one gallop. An endearing coming-of-age story about a poor swamp boy and his permanently grieving (and perpetually drunk) widowed father (another Huck Finn parallel, although this Drunk Daddy is FAR more charming and good-hearted than Huck's.) There's even a Widow Watson character...sounds terribly derivative, but somehow this book is able to withstand the comparison to Twain and stand on its own more modest merits. I truly recommend it!

## **J.K. Grice says**

Ken Wells was my first introduction to southern novelists. His books are full of wonderful characters and subtle prose. MEELY LaBAUVE is a fun bayou romp!

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## **Laura Cushing says**

Meely LaBauve is narrated by 15 year old Meely, a Cajun boy mostly raising himself in a Louisiana bayou. Meely's mother is dead, and his father spends more time out drinking and hunting gators than he does at home. Meely doesn't go to school on a regular basis, but he's smart - and he knows how to survive.

When he does go to school, he has trouble with the local bully Junior and his gang. The trouble with Junior explodes into a big trouble that could change Meely's life forever.

Full of colorful characters, coming-of-age moments, and a great setting - this is a quick, engaging read. It's told in first person in Meely's speaking style, and a non-conventional formatting - and done really well.

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## **Mary says**

Fifteen-year-old Meely LaBauve is growing up on Catahoula Bayou and living by his wits. Not since Huck Finn rafted down the Mississippi has there been a coming-of-age story like this, told in such an utterly authentic unlettered American voice. From a charming encounter with first love in the Canciennes' corn patch to an adventurous paddle through wild and timeless places little explored, Ken Wells has cooked up a zesty gumbo of a book--rich, poignant, and often hilarious. \* An American Library Association YALSA best book of the year

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## **Simon Robs says**

His Daddy says, 'He's a runt but he's got hound dog ways, and brains to boot.'

Well, Meely ain't Huck but they's bro's in bildungsroman pages of a good yarn told by writer's steeped in their each neck of woods or swamps or riversides. Both make vernacular a pivot to points of plot and scare up the surrounding flora/fauna to paint the scenes where action drives a boy's rituals of place. It's humor mixed with harsh reality as life waits for nobody to grow-up before being tossed to the wolves of circumstance. Here's bayou justice writ small with a heap of chunky etouffee that'll leave ya flottant!

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## **Alarie says**

Wells takes us on a delightful romp among crazy Cajuns. This is his first novel and, fortunately for readers, the beginning of a trilogy. His style is reminiscent of Clyde Edgerton and T.R. Pearson. Because it's a

coming of age story of a smart, sweet boy, the rougher moments from poverty to racism and bullying are relieved with hope and humor. Meely's mother died when he was seven, and his grief-stricken, hard-drinking father mostly leaves him to raise himself. Get ready to wrestle some gators and outwit the cops. You'll soon fall in love with Meely and wish you could take him home.

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### **Linda says**

Absolutely loved this book. Can't understand why it hasn't been made into a movie.

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### **Martha says**

Meely LaBauve had me hooked with the Cajun and Southern names, phrases, songs, and setting. Ken Wells understands the lifestyle, beliefs and passions of the characters on both sides of the conflict in this story. I loved the way Meely and his father talked to each other and understood the strengths and limits of each other. Meely's friends were honest and his enemies were just wrong. I wanted to keep reading because I was so curious about what was going to happen next. It's a great story.

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### **Keely says**

With his daddy usually off gator hunting, or else drinking and hell raising, 15-year-old Meely LaBauve is pretty much left to fend for himself. He does a pretty fair job of it, too, going to school when the notion takes him, and feeding himself off the fruit of the swamps. But when a run-in with a gang of rough boys at school lands Meely and his daddy in trouble with the law, Meely's free-wheeling existence is put on the line. It's a good thing Meely is such a good hearted, charming young man with friends in high and low places.

I really enjoyed this wild, Cajun-flavored story with such a quirky, likable character at its heart. It's a page turner for sure!

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### **Anders says**

This week I read for 3 hours and 3 minutes and I am on pg 175 currently in meely labauve there is a kid named meely he lives in the catahoula swamp with his dad in Louisiana. Meelies dad is an alcoholic who always has ways he gets into trouble with the cops. He gets arrested a lot so meely basically lives by himself with a couple of friends like chickie, Cassie and an enemy named junior. Junior is the worst person that you would ever want to be enemies with. He beats, cusses out, and gets meely arrested for doing absolutely nothing. Then one day junior tries to beat up meely and meely beats up junior instead and junior goes and gets his uncle to arrest meely. But then mealies dad shows up and almost kills junior and his uncle but instead leaves them and tries to run. But it doesn't take long for the cops to catch him. Melody breaks his leg and his dad runs to escape the cops and meely goes to jail that is where I am right now.

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### **William says**

This is the second time I've read this novel. I just got the other two books in the trilogy and thought it would be a good idea to refresh my memory. I think it was Tom Sawyer who said, "The rumors of my death have been highly exaggerated." Well, that goes for Huck as well; he is alive and well in Meely LaBauve living in the mid-twentieth century in Louisiana. Though I think some people would call this a young adult novel, it is as rich in content as *To Kill a Mockingbird* and several others of that ilk. I had once thought about teaching this book, but I'm pretty sure it wouldn't fly in our school. It is certainly more worthy than *Hunger Games* or *Twilight*, which I am sorry to say are beginning to replace books like *Lord of the Flies*, *The Great Gatsby*, *Of Mice and Men*, etc.

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### **Teresa Mancuso says**

I am always looking for good books to share with my grandchildren and hoped this would be one. Unfortunately this book has more sex and violence than appropriate for them.

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### **Linda says**

#### **Wow**

Five stars and "wow" are reserved for books I will re read (a very short list accumulated over five decades) If regional reality and vernacular are not your thing, then this book isn't for you. But if you don't mind reading about the struggles of the south in rural Louisiana you will enjoy this tale of a young man growing up in the swamp. Note: There is a glossary of Cajun words in the back of the book that has definitions and pronunciations of Cajun words and names. I do wish I had seen that before I read the book but even without it, this book still deserves five stars. I will definitely be reading more by this author.

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