



## **Bandit's Moon**

*Sid Fleischman , Jos. A. Smith (Illustrator)*

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After a narrow escape from the nasty O. O. Mary's clutches, Annyrose ventures forth to find her long-lost brother Lank in gold-digging territory. But the journey is rough, bandits and fiends waiting for the traveler at every bend. Soon Annyrose runs into Joaquin Murieta, legendary bandit of the Gold Rush.

This complete disaster, however, soon appears to be no less than a blessing for both! They can help each other out: Annyrose can teach Joaquin how to read so he will know where danger lies, and in turn he can make sure she's safe and fed. But in a time when corruption and greed are running wild, will their friendship be more than fool's gold?

### Bandit's Moon Details

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Author : Sid Fleischman , Jos. A. Smith (Illustrator)

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## From Reader Review Bandit's Moon for online ebook

### Bayla says

Buzzwords: Historical fiction, bandits, Mexico vs. America, seeking gold

*"I looked at him and saw that for the great bandit, nothing was altered. He would continue his proud outlaw life, avenging himself on Yankees. Like an arrow in flight, he couldn't change direction"*

When Joaquin, the "Robin Hood of the California Gold Rush" comes to the house where Annyrose has been held by the wicked O.O. Mary, she takes the opportunity to escape, to seek her brother. But traveling with the bandits, she learns a lot, and has to question things she's always taken for granted.

This was a plot driven story, and the characters were not as well developed as I would have liked, nor as carefully shaded. However, an enjoyable look at a historical bandit that I hadn't known about before.

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### Josiah says

One quickly learns what to expect after reading a Sid Fleischman Western adventure or two: colorful characters with language steeped in the culture of the time period, a deeper mystery that isn't resolved until the plot takes a few blind corners right near the end of the book, and a style and sense of humor that no other creator of juvenile lit can quite match. *Bandit's Moon* is as entertaining and well-built as any of the Sid Fleischman Westerns I've read, and I have no doubt kids will have a ball with it.

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### Tommy V says

One of the things I wanted to do with my 8-year old son one summer, in addition to swimming, going to county fairs and ball games, and playing in the park, was to read for at least 30 minutes a day. And, to make the experience more enjoyable for him (and to help him with his reading comprehension) we agreed to read the same books.

*Bandit's Moon* by Sid Fleischman became my son's favourite book that he read so far that summer. It is set during the California Gold Rush of the early 1850s, and tells the tale of an unlikely pair. Annyrose Smith is a pre-teen who is separated from her only kin, her older brother Lank. She is inadvertently rescued from a horrible situation by the infamous Joaquin Murieta, a real-life Mexican bandit who struck terror in the mining community. Wary of him but also realizing that he provides her access to look for her brother, Annyrose asks Joaquin if she can ride with him and his gang. Joaquin agrees to it, on the condition that Annyrose teach him how to read English so that he can understand what the gringos are saying about him in newspapers and on Wanted posters.

Annyrose's pre-conceived ideas of Joaquin as a ruthless bandit are challenged throughout the book, in Joaquin's words and actions. For example, Joaquin explains to her that before the discovery of gold in California, the Mexicans and gringo ranchers co-existed peacefully. But once gold was discovered, the gringos passed a series of laws and taxes that forced Mexicans off their own land. Therefore, when he steals from settlers, he takes what he believes to rightfully be his. But his methods of robbery appear to run contrary to his reputation as a cold-blooded killer.

Fleischman does a good job of not moralizing in this story. He lays out Joaquin's reasons for doing what he does (in Joaquin's words, *es destino*) and has Annyrose grapple with the issue that she has befriended a bad man who might not be so bad after all, if the laws were just. However, since the laws are what they are, Joaquin appears headed for his destiny--a hanging. More than once, Annyrose is given the opportunity to turn in this outlaw, if that is what he truly is.

There is plenty of action within the book's 132 pages, which appealed to my son as it made reading *Bandit's Moon* fun. I would ask him questions about Joaquin and what he thought of him. At first, my son thought he was a bad person, but he later modified his opinion of him. He thought Joaquin was actually one of the good guys and that the posse trying to catch him were the bad guys, and he kept asking me, "Are they going to capture him? Will he die?" To that I would answer, find out for yourself.

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### **Kade says**

I picked up this book when I was still in secondary school (I was a bit of an advanced reader, if I do say so myself), after my junior-high aged cousin left it lying around. It was one of the first books that really hit me, and I daresay that I compare how I felt about other books to how I felt years ago, after I finished this book.

Until today, actually, I couldn't remember the name or the author, but I could still tell anyone who asked what happened and in what order. It had a lasting effect on me. I'll definitely be picking up a copy as soon as possible.

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### **Miss Amanda says**

gr 3-6 132 pgs

mid 1800s, Southwest. Ever since her brother left her with O O Mary, 12 year old Annyrose has waited for him to send for her. O O Mary treats Annyrose like a slave and calls her an orphan. But Annyrose knows that her brother is out there and when the bandit Joaquin Murieta robs O O Mary, Annyrose decides to go along with him in hopes he might help her find her brother.

As she gets to know him she finds out that not everything she's heard about Murieta is true. Is he a bandit or a robin hood?

Great story!!

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### **Katie Fitzgerald says**

This review also appears on my blog, Read-at-Home Mom.

Set in the early 1850s, *Bandit's Moon* is the story of a young girl named Annyrose Smith, who has been imprisoned by a nasty old woman named O.O. Mary. When she makes her escape, she immediately sets out to look for her older brother, Lank, from whom she has become separated, but instead, she falls in with a

gang of bandits led by Joaquin Marieta, the Mexican Robin Hood. Though she deplores Joaquin's dishonest behavior, she can't help but be charmed by his personality, and she does her best to help him before ultimately making another very narrow escape.

Like Weasel and Mr. Tucket, *Bandit's Moon* is another adventure story from the early days of the American West. Though the main character in this story is a girl and the main villain a real person, there is very little else to differentiate this story from the others. Details about the actual Gold Rush are few and far between, and instead the story focuses mainly on Annyrose's feelings of warmth and concern toward Joaquin. It's an entertaining read, which introduces a larger-than-life historical figure most kids probably would not otherwise learn about, but as a historical lesson about the time period, it would fall pretty flat. Though the main character is much younger, *Bo at Ballard Creek* does a much better job of exploring the daily life of gold prospectors from a more realistic and less romanticized point of view.

Sid Fleischman's talent as a writer is evident in the McBroom books and in his Newbery winning novel, *The Whipping Boy*, but this book is less memorable. I would keep it on hand for kids who love this time period - and for girls requesting adventure stories with female protagonists - but I will likely forgo using it for homeschooling.

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## Questingforaquest says

My sister brought this home from school when she was in elementary school and I was in middle school. I picked it up to flip through the pages and didn't put it down until a couple hours later, when I had finished the whole thing. I've given it as a gift and eventually bought a copy for myself, and will still occasionally read it in one sitting; it's one of those books I have to be careful of picking up, because I'm still liable to have a hard time putting it down!

Sid Fleischman had won a Newberry for a book a few decades before this, *The Whipping Boy*, which touches on similar issues. That book, if I remember right, had more to do with class issues, while this one is touching on issues of racism and xenophobia--the question, though, is who the foreigners are, since California, at this point in time, had only recently transferred to the United States and, until the Gold Rush, was still inhabited mostly by people who identified more as Mexican.

If you're worried about whether your kid can handle it, though, don't worry, it's not too heavy or pedantic and a kid is liable not to pick up on the messages very strongly; it's done in a way that definitely gets the message across, but doesn't hit you over the head with it. There isn't a clear delineation of which "side" we should sympathize with, and I liked that; Annyrose is afraid of the bandits at first because they're Mexican, and her father was killed in the recent war against Mexico; and the Mexicans are wary of a "gringo". Annyrose has plenty of moments of realizing that despite the cultural differences, the bandits and their Mexican allies are just as human as she is, and Joaquin shows different sides to himself in how he treats non-Mexicans. On the one hand, he sees the White 49ers as deserving of being vandalized because they're taking the land from the Mexicans, and when Annyrose objects to being called a Yankee because she's from Louisiana, he answers, "You're all Yankees!" But at the same time, he's willing to take a "gringo" under his wing, and eventually comes to trust Annyrose enough to take her to a family party and, when she tries to interfere with a heist, doesn't treat her as harshly as he might have before. Similarly, Annyrose explores a camp of 49ers from South America and discovers that the Chilenos don't like the Argentinians, ect....the different groups aren't all "just foreigners", lumped under the same category, they all have distinctions amongst and between themselves and are factionalizing themselves. It's a good book if you want to discuss race, xenophobia or immigration with your child.

The nice thing about it, though, is that it's also a fun story. A lot of award-winning books for middle-readers are what adults want kids to read, rather than what kids want to read. This is a fun combination of both. The story is good and moves at a good pace, and isn't too long (this is a good choice for reluctant readers). It's entertaining and re-readable, so your kidlet is liable to breeze through the whole thing, not necessarily paying conscious attention to the meaty stuff in it, but then be able to have a discussion about it if asked. It definitely combines the best of both worlds for adults and kids.

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### **Mike Ehlers says**

My daughter read this for "Battle of the Books" at school. She said the book confused her a little, but she liked it anyway. I don't know if I would have liked it when I was young, non sci-fi adventure books weren't my thing. But reading it now I was pleasantly surprised at the depth of the story. Prejudices and motivations are examined without being too blunt about it. Not bad for my first Fleischman book.

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### **Ale Rivero says**

Esta ha sido una entretenida historia de aventura que aún historia. Joaquín existió, pero poco se sabe de su vida, y las aventuras que nos presenta el autor parecen ir muy bien con el recuerdo que se tiene de él. A través de la voz de Annyrose podemos conocer a este forajido mexicano que era más bien un Robin Hood californiano.

Puede que esta sea una historia corta y simple, pero está tan bien narrada que se vuelve sumamente entretenida e imposible de dejar hasta ver cómo termina. Muy recomendable

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### **J.M. McAlpine says**

I listened to this on a long car ride. I find listening to a book is much different from reading. I also think that if I was reading this book, I would've put it down and not finished it.

I'm probably bias because the book was geared towards children - I think 5th-6th grade, not me. Granted there are kid books I like but this one was just ok. It follows the adventure a girl, Annie, takes out west. Eventually, she is picked up by a bandit and spends time with him. (she would argue kidnapped but ... read it and you decide) Much of the story, is about how the bandit is misrepresented. Her view of the world and her decision making was simple and clear .... and predictable.

It was an OK book, it moved but it stayed on the surface of the story plus, again, I don't think I was the target audience.

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### **Kim says**

I read this one with my kids and really enjoyed the picture of the gold rush that Fleischman painted. It was a complicated time and this book really makes you question the idea of the good guys/bad guys.

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### **Abigail says**

If this isn't a classic already, then it definitely should be. Bandit's Moon is by far my favorite childhood book, and still remains one of my favorites even today. Although aimed at middle school aged children, it is a fantastic tale of a young girl who ends up on a crazy adventure with Mexican bandits. Though less detailed than a novel aimed at an older audience would be, I still feel like Bandit's Moon captures the culture of the time period.

Based off a true--though little known--person, there is plenty of leeway for wild adventures without going far from what truly happened to the real Joaquin. The dialogue between characters is written to show the accents of the Mexican bandits, as well as the many other characters. Each character has his own story to tell, with each melding together to push the plot along.

Bandit's Moon is a fantastic tale of adventure that will take young readers right along with the Mexican Bandits and their young tag-along. Full of action, fun dialogue, and colorful characters, it's a book worth reading by any age group.

I bought this book, and therefore was not required nor asked to write a review, nor a positive one at that. I was not compensated for this review.

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### **Jodi Fairforest says**

I did not expect such a tiny book to give me so many emotions.

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### **Chalice Neipp says**

Great story about how one girl survives the wild west with an outlaw and his band of thieves. Annyrose lets a band of Mexican bandits to believe that she is a boy to get away from a horrible life she was. Her hopes are that she will find her brother somewhere in California where he went to strike it rich. Annyrose learns the power of a rumors verses facts, of western justice and vigilante, of truth verses fear, and above all, to stand up for what is right even when you fear for your life. Joaquín Murieta, the infamous outlaw, shows Annyrose that there are two sides to every story. Excellent story. We had this as a read aloud and the narrator did a great job.

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### **Diane says**

AnnyRose, left by her brother with O.O. Mary until he can earn money enough to support her, suddenly finds herself hiding from the dread Joaquin, a notorious bandit. She's found almost immediately, but Joaquin thinks "this boy" could help him learn what he really needs to know ... how to read English. So, she begins her journey toward her bother with a group of outlaws, trying to understand what drives them.

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