

Book Title: Wildoak

Author: C.C. Harrington

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Star Teen Book Reviewer of Be the Star You Are! Charity

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Maggie Stephens has a stutter. A bad one, except when she's talking to animals. Although, talking to animals can't get her through school. She avoids talking to people whenever she can. She has developed tactics to do so.

“Margaret Stephens, please start at the bottom of page thirty-four.”

Right, she was in class.

There was no way she was reading; she would block and stutter and everyone would laugh.

“Margaret?”

The only thing she had in her hands was her pencil, so she did what any girl with a stutter would do. She shoved it through her palm so hard that the pencil stuck out of the other side. This act got her a suspension. The third one in two years. Her unsympathetic father wants to send her to Granville, the place where Tom Baker supposedly was beaten for crying. She opts for her mother's intervention, she will be sent to be with her grandfather, in hopes that being in the country air will fix her.

With her grandfather she finds a snow leopard cub in Wildoak Forest. The cub used to be a gift to a wealthy Londoner but now, it's Maggie's friend. She sneaks food from her grandfather's kitchen to feed the cub but once the others find out about the cub. She must protect herself and the cub.

Wildoak is set in the Big Freeze of 1963 in England, and I truly believe that this book is good. I like that it gives emphasis to a group of people who don't usually get a lot of understanding. What I didn't mention was that the story is told in alternative voices, one part Maggie, one part the cub. I thought the voice of the snow leopard was interesting and a nice refresher. I do think this book is good for most ages and that this kind of representation is exactly what young readers need. . I would recommend this book for 9 - 12-year-old kids to read.

Recommended Titles:

The Flight of Swans by Sarah McGuire

Wolf Hollow by Lauren Wolk

I am Number Four by Pittacus Lore

The False Prince by Jennifer A. Neilsen

Warriors: Into the Wild by Erin Hunter