



The Unbreakable Code

Sara Hoagland Hunter, Julia Miner (Illustrator)

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This book portrays the quiet pride of a Navajo code talker as he explains to his grandson how the Navajo language, faith and ingenuity helped win World War II.

The Unbreakable Code Details

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Author : Sara Hoagland Hunter , Julia Miner (Illustrator)

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Genre : Childrens, Picture Books, Historical, Historical Fiction, Realistic Fiction, Cultural

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From Reader Review The Unbreakable Code for online ebook

Tiffany says

More of an upper elementary book than younger.

Kirsten says

An important story told by a grandfather to his grandson of his quiet pride to serve as a Navajo code-talker during WWII. A nice introduction to the Navajo's dedication to country and significant contribution to the war effort.

Ezra says

its a good book.....

Dolly says

This is a wonderful tale that explains the legacy of the Navajo Code Talkers, but in a way that is conversational and easy to understand for children. The story is told as part of a conversation between a grandfather (who was a code talker) and his grandson. While the back story is not entirely necessary, it helps to frame the reason for the conversation and it works well.

I really appreciated the author's note at the beginning of the book that helped to explain more of the finer details of the effect the code talkers had on the war, things that did not necessarily come out in the tale. We were quite familiar with these famous Marines, as my husband is a Marine too. It was a terrific way to help reinforce the history lessons we'd learned.

The illustrations are colorful and expressive and I liked the little details, like the turquoise ring that the grandfather wore throughout the book. (I actually thought it was quite appropriate that he had it on while on the ship, but off when he was in the jungle and needed to have cover and concealment.)

Overall, I thought this was a very well-written and engaging story that also teaches an important piece of American history. We really enjoyed reading this book together.

Amanda Catalina says

The Unbreakable code is a captivating story of the unbreakable code of the Navajo language during World War II. In this story a young boy listens to his grandfather's story of how he became apart of the war because they needed boys who could speak Navajo. This remained the only code that the Japanese could not decode.

This story is great for children because it shows a side of America that is rarely discussed. It also shows how America's multicultural has been beneficial to the nation. This art displays watercolor drawings of the war and the beautiful landscape of the desert. The author informs the reader of both an important part of history and the uniqueness of a different culture and its language. Also how language is part of a culture.

Beth Schencker says

When John is forced to move off the reservation because his mother has remarried a man not from the Navajo tribe. Grandfather tells the young boy not to be afraid - he has an "unbreakable code". The code he refers to is the Navajo language. The US military used Navajo-speaking soldiers to help win the war. Nearly 420 "code talkers" served in the Marine Corps and helped save many American lives during WWII.

Shea Lavalier says

Interest Level: Lower Grades

Reading Level: 4.2

Guided Reading Level: S

Genre: Historical Fiction

Support for the genre: The book uses real events from history to create a fictional narrative.

Additional Genres: Picture Books

Summary:

John fears his move to Minnesota to live with his mother's new husband. When he runs away to hide, his grandfather finds and comforts him by telling the story of when he first left home and joined the military. His grandfather tells him about the gift that John has as a Navajo, the unbreakable code. During World War II, he served as a radio operator in the Pacific theater using his native Navajo language to relay messages. When he finishes the story, John is not nearly as afraid to move away. He is the son of a Navajo code talker and he has a language that helped save the country.

Mentor Writing Traits:

Ideas:

The title, The Unbreakable Code, entices the audience to read the book. Instead of just facts about Navajo code talkers, the theme is presented in a comforting and approachable manner.

Organization:

The story leads the reader in an unanticipated direction when the grandfather begins telling John his stories from the war. It is easy to become engrossed in the descriptions and stories he tells.

Voice:

The author uses the grandfather as a storyteller to relay the theme of the book. The narrative of the grandfather is compelling and the feelings he had during his childhood and the war are conveyed well.

Word Choice:

The writer uses metaphors and similes to bring imagery to the writing. Rivers are described as a "silver thread" through John's home and later as "blood red". The author also uses words from the Navajo language to help the reader understand how it was used.

Sentence Fluency:

The storytelling from the grandfather makes the piece easy to read aloud. His story is rhythmic and

engrossing, enhancing the theme of the book.

Conventions:

The writing has mechanical correctness and uses punctuation, grammar, and capitalization correctly throughout.

Classroom Integration and other suggestions:

This book could be integrated into many different lessons in the classroom. It could be used as a means for students to embrace their culture, who they are, and be proud of themselves. For social studies, it could be used to learn about World War II or other wars and strategies used during them. It could also be integrated into Native American lesson to discuss how they were forced out of their homes and sent to boarding schools in an attempt to “civilize” them. This would provide a way for student so view a topic from two different perspectives and use that to examine Manifest Destiny and westward expansion from not just a Eurocentric viewpoint.

Nicole says

I might go with 3.5 stars on this one, but opted for the higher 4-star rating.

I enjoyed the history of the code talkers from World War II at a simplified level presented for kids, but the book was very wordy (especially for a picture book) and didn't keep the attention of my 1st grade boy very well. The setting the story is told in by a grandfather to his grandson, who is moving away from the reservation. To me, the connection the author attempte to make between that situation and the code talkers fell totally flat, but, as I said, I did enjoy the code talker narrative.

Very interesting is the list of the code with the Navajo pronounciation and the English translation in the back of the book.

Sarah says

I quite liked the story of the codetalkers that this relates, and the author prefaces the book by discussing how she interviewed actual code talkers before she wrote the book. I didn't really like the framing story about the boy who was leaving his grandfather to move out of the reservation and needed to hear this story to gain confidence. I thought that it detracted from the overall story, and that it sent a conflicting message about the importance of heritage and the importance of land and family.

Susan Tuttle says

What I liked so much about this book was how hypocrisy is brought to light. The government schools banned the Navajo children from speaking their native language and then the government used their language to help send military code during WWII. This story shows that all cultures have value and reminds us to celebrate our differences rather than try to make all people fit one mold. This is a story that all children should hear and ponder.

Becky says

Beautiful story. I learned a piece of WWII history about the Navajo code talkers that was novel to me and that I can now pass on to my students and children. The Navajo children should have great pride in the way their ancestors were able to serve our country when no one else could as their language was not written.

Sally says

John doesn't want to move to Minnesota with his mom and new step dad. His grandfather tells him about how he had to go to a government boarding school and wasn't allowed to speak his Navajo language. He had chewed a lot of soap in those days. Grandfather continues to tell how he ran away and joined the Marines as a Navajo codetalker. "... 'All those years they told us to forget Navajo, and now the government needs it to save the country!'

A note from the author includes information about the code talker program. Back matter includes Navajo words used in the code. This book is a concise introduction to the role of the codetalker.

Lyn says

A friend recommended this book. She is from the Navajo Nation and her grandfather was a code talker and she said this was a well done book. I agree, it was a great history lesson and life lesson. I especially liked the list of code words included at the end of the book.

Andrea Riffle says

I really liked this book! It focuses on John, a young boy whose mother is getting married. Not only that, but this means she's leaving the reservation, which means John has to leave too. John's grandfather tells him on an unbreakable code their people have, meaning the Navajo code used during World War II. His grandfather explains how this code helped the Allies win the war. The images are beautiful and the language used in the story is informative and intriguing. This book also explores finding yourself and coming to an understanding as to who you are. This book is relatable to any individual, as this is a question we all ask ourselves at some point in life. And the measures these brave individuals went to protect our country should instill pride in the reader. Overall, this book is excellent and well-worth a read!

Sharon says

I picked this up at a book sale recently and read it aloud to my kids today. It's the first time they've seen me cry while reading a children's book. The Navajos fought to save and protect a country that was unjust to them. Facing that kind of goodness brings the tears. I don't think the kids will be able to forget this story after

seeing how their mom reacted.

Beautifully illustrated and reads aloud well. The realities of war are described, so it's not a easy light book, but definitely worthwhile.
