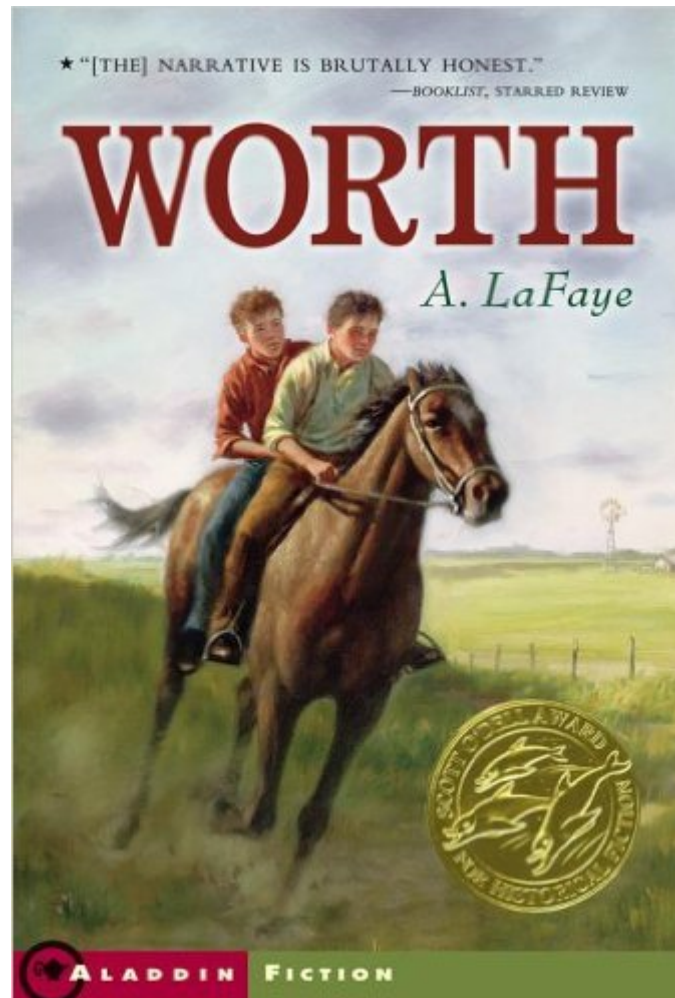


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# Worth



## Synopsis

Before the accident Nathaniel's life seemed pretty good. His help around the farm made his father proud. But now, with a busted leg, Nathaniel can't do farmwork anymore, so his father adopts another son through the Orphan Train. Feeling replaced and useless, Nathaniel attends school for the first time. Meanwhile, sturdy and strong John is able to do the work that earns Pa's attention. But the truth is, John Worth has his own set of troubles. He is treated more like a servant than a son. Kept awake at night by nightmares of his family's death, he remembers having a pa who took pride in him. But now he has no one, until a community battle and a special book reveal a potential friend -- and a chance for understanding.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 830 (What's this?)

Paperback: 160 pages

Publisher: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers; Reprint edition (June 1, 2006)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1416916245

ISBN-13: 978-0439913423

Product Dimensions: 5.1 x 0.5 x 7.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 4.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (39 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #28,377 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #21 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > Adoption](#) #43 in [Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > United States > 1800s](#) #48 in [Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Where We Live > Farm Life](#)

Age Range: 9 - 12 years

Grade Level: 4 - 7

## Customer Reviews

You know, you can never have too many awards for works of children's fiction. Sometimes that's the only way you're ever going to find an audience for a perfectly nice but sadly forgotten title. Take, "Worth" as an example. Until it won itself a rather prestigious Scott O'Dell Award For Historical Fiction, I hadn't heard so much as a breath upon the wind about it. It seemed nice enough, of course. But historical fiction is something I find myself unconsciously avoiding. When the O'Dell honor fell upon it, however, I picked "Worth" up for some good reading. What I found proves that no

matter how great a book is, if it gets lost in the shuffle then it may remain an exceptional but forgotten title. I'm pleased to see so many kids reviewing it on their own. Hopefully that will mean that "Worth" will become a classic simply by word of mouth. It all would have been fine if the lightning hadn't come. That was the whole reason why Nathaniel, his father, and his mother were out in the fields working like mad to get their crops in before the rain fell. In his haste to help out, Nate gets his pitchfork stuck in the ground and, in freeing it, happens to be in the way of the horses when the lightning spooks them. The wheel of the wagon and the horses themselves break the boy's leg all to pieces and though he lives he'll never walk the same again. This is a particular problem on a farm where every family member has to pull their own weight. That means Nate has to be replaced by John Worth, an orphan from New York City who's been taken in by Nate's pa. No one likes John, but as Nate slowly begins to learn this stranger's story he crawls a little bit away from his own self-pity and into liking this odd city slicker.

Nathaniel James lives in the American Midwest on the family farm. He thinks he has it good, until the storm arrives on the plains. As his family tries to save the crops from the wind and devastating rains, a flash of light blinds Nathaniel's eyes. When he awakes, he finds himself screaming in pain, and notices that his leg is red-hot, struck by lightning. When the village doctor arrives, he tells Nathaniel's family that his leg will never properly heal. That starts a chain of downward events that will make him feel miserable. The first is that Nathaniel must go to the village school and learn with a group of first-graders. After limping home and receiving taunts from the schoolchildren, Nathaniel finds his father and his mother arguing. The answer appears when a boy arrives to Nathaniel's farm. Since Nathaniel's leg is forever damaged, his father bought a boy named John Worth from the Orphan Train, who does all of the work that Nathaniel used to do. Feeling like he's been replaced, Nathaniel begins to hate John immediately. Also, Nathaniel has trouble reading, and even children several years younger than him are able to outperform him in mathematics. Nathaniel becomes so infuriated that he tosses his English book out his window, only to hear John's attempt to pronounce words. Things become worse until he meets a Greek girl named Anemone, and borrows a book from her on Greek myths to help him read. As things for Nathaniel begin to improve, the situation within the community is bleak. A war is about to begin between the farmers and the ranchers. Over a long rivalry with the Danver and Gantry family, and as a result, several farms and ranches have been damaged. However, there is a more personal struggle, as Nathaniel hits John after both begin to shout at each other.

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