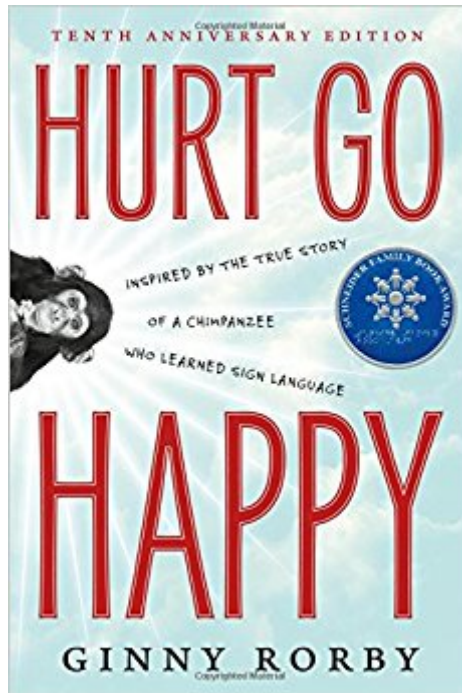




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Hurt Go Happy: A Novel



Synopsis

Hurt Go Happy is a captivating novel for young readers by beloved author Ginny Rorby. The Schneider Family Book Award-winning novel is inspired by the true story of a chimpanzee raised as a human. Thirteen-year-old Joey Willis is used to being left out of conversations. Though she's been deaf since the age of six, Joey's mother has never allowed her to learn sign language. She strains to read the lips of those around her and often fails. Everything changes when Joey meets Dr. Charles Mansell and his baby chimpanzee, Sukari. Her new friends use sign language to communicate, and Joey secretly begins to learn to sign. Spending time with Charlie and Sukari, Joey has never been happier. But as Joey's world blooms with possibilities, Charlie's and Sukari's choices begin to narrow—until Sukari's very survival is in doubt. Hurt Go Happy is the unforgettable story of one girl's determination to save the life of a fellow creature—one who has the ability to ask for help. Hurt Go Happy is the winner of the Schneider Family Book Award. It's also an International Literacy Association Teachers' Choices selection, a Book Sense Children's Pick, a KLIATT Editor's Choice: Best of the Year's Hardcover YA Fiction selection, and a New York Public Library "Books for the Teen Age" selection.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Grade 6-9 Joey Willis is deaf, and her mother won't allow her to learn American Sign Language. Her isolated existence is turned upside down, however, when she meets her elderly neighbor, Dr. Charles Mansell, and his sign-language-using chimpanzee, Sukari. Against her

mother's wishes, Joey begins to learn to sign, and Charlie, whose parents were deaf, opens her eyes to a future filled with possibilities. When he dies, Sukari's fate is left in Joey's hands. Rorby has clearly done her research. From the dialogue gaps that allow youngsters to share the frustration even a skilled lip reader feels, to a brutal scene in a chimp-filled research facility, the wealth of details support but, unfortunately, often overwhelm the story. The tale is so dense that many plot threads are abruptly abandoned, and the narrative skips ahead at random intervals. Laden with issues—parent-child relationships, the treatment of research animals, and child abuse (Joey's deafness is the result of a beating by her father)—the book often gets bogged down in its own seriousness. However, the writing shines when Rorby focuses on what is obviously her true passion: Sukari and the fate of chimpanzees like her.

Kathleen Kelly MacMillan,
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"This unusual and emotional story will intrigue animal lovers and those looking for a gripping family drama. The characters are well crafted . . . The novel is beautifully written and believable."

--VOYA"Has the potential to be a classic animal story with wide appeal . . . Rorby successfully gets to the core of a moving animal-human relationship; she conveys how sign language can liberate those unable to speak or hear." --Kliatt (starred review) --This text refers to the MP3 CD edition.

There are many books about handicapped children. About insensitive parents of wise and troubled children and the intricacies of growing up. About our relationships, for good and for ill, with other species. This is the only book I know that weaves three all together — to perfection — as a passionate appeal for us to value all living things. *Hurt Go Happy* has three connected layers, almost stories within stories. The first is often hard — painful — to read. On every page, a gasp. It is the story of an abused deaf child, Joey. Yes, when a loving mother mistreats her child through her own blindness and fear, even in the name of "doing what's best," it is abuse. And here Rorby illuminates the deep truths of all our lives: Can we ever get over being abused? Can we ever forgive ourselves for our mistakes as parents? Will the Hurt ever Go? Must we assess everyone — ourselves, strangers, even (maybe especially) the people who love us? The second layer is an uplifting fairytale. An intelligent deaf child, struggling for a sense of self and some control over her life, meets a kind old man and a young chimpanzee — the wise elder and the magical beast of folklore. With their help and love, Joey can go forward in her quest. This tapestry is

woven so exquisitely you forget the art in it. The material is tough, rough canvas, the threads of the characters bright and dark; your brain and heart are worked to bits. Joey, her mother, brother, and stepfather, are palpably real. The old man and the chimpanzee are inspired. Events unroll as naturally as life, or rather, as a well-told tale. The third thread, the bottom layer connecting all, is also painful: the story of our relationship with other animals, so often criminally lacking in understanding and care. Just when we despair of Joey in her struggle, she's plunged into a close communication with the chimp, Sukari, and eventually asked to take responsibility for her. In fighting for a being more helpless than herself, Joey grows. Who is this book for? Young adults, of course. But also old adults. We still need to see good and evil in all their complexity! For parents everywhere, trying to raise self-confident yet compassionate children, and needing a reality-check on their own behavior from time to time. Most of all, it is for people who can recognize in other species and in our children "other nations, caught with ourselves in the net of life and time, fellow prisoners of the splendor and travail of the earth." (Henry Beston, *The Outermost House*) I give most books I review 5 stars because I'm no longer willing to write about things I don't love. But the liveliest comments and attention these days seem to cluster about 2- and 3-star ratings. Many people can't wait to pan somebody else's work, and then argue about it. So I considered giving *Hurt Go Happy* 1 star and a rave review. In the end, though, I couldn't do it. This is a wonderful book, deserving of another star every time you read it. To yourself, to your friends, your children, your lucky grandchildren. A skyful of stars, then, for Ginny Rorby and Joey and Sukari!

I am a sixth grade teacher, and this book is amazing! After I read it, I offered it to my students. It was passed around all year long as a "must read"! The Animal genre has long been an interest to students. So many novels are fictional and based on cats or dogs. It was refreshing to read a book based on a true story of a chimpanzee raised as a human. The fact that the main character is deaf and is able to sign with the chimpanzee makes the story extremely touching. We share 98% of our DNA with them, and you can "feel" that as you read the book! Great message: No one is too young to make a difference! Inspiring theme of compassion!

Thank u!

A friend recommended this book for my daughters, since the main character in the book is also deaf. I chose to read the book before giving it to them. I read this book quickly, it is an easy read. I

decided to not let my girls read this book for the following reasons:1. There is much confusion over what caused her deafness, they allude to a reason but it doesn't make sense and they never explain it fully. Since my girls have hearing loss, I found that the book made the main character's hearing loss seem more mysterious and dark. This isn't a negative for the book, simply a negative for our children.2. There are many plot lines in the book that, when finished with the book, are left dangling with never giving any closure. I just found this book to be interesting but not well finished.3. Biggest reason: The main character is a teen, and repeatedly takes huge risks against her mother's objections. These risks always work out and there is no consequence for her disobedience, only reward. This troubles me the most. I'm sorry, but the world rarely works like that and I teach my children that Mom and Dad are here to keep them safe and to teach them how to grow into responsible adults. I do not shield my children from the concept that sometimes disobeying can work, there are many great books where that theme does occur, but since this book deals with so many other issues, it is simply not worth me going over what could have gone wrong in the situations where the main character takes risks and wins.Summary: I enjoyed this book on the surface. It was an easy read. Over all themes and plot of the book are not well formed and explained. There is a good explanation of why sign language can be vital for communication, but the fact that the mother in the book is shown over and over to be wrong, makes this a book that I would not recommend for a young (11-14) reader.

Hurt Go Happy written and researched by Ginny Rorby is a powerful story that will intrigue animal lovers. Inspired by the true story of Lucy, a sign-language-using chimpanzee, a young abused girl, an abused dog and the world of chimps used for medical research. The author has researched every aspect of not only the deaf and signing community, but also that of the chimpanzee world. This thought provoking book is appropriate for 6th grade to adult. Readers Guide at the end is perfect for teachers or guidance counselors. Visit Friends of Washoe at[...]

I'm using this as part of my ASL curriculum this year.

This book is just truly amazing. I've been reading it and rereading it since I was 13. It's one of my favorites. There is just so much emotion in this book.

I chose to rate this because it was good but it didn't have enough action. But over all it was a great book.

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