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By The Great Horn Spoon!



Synopsis

In this rollicking adventure set during the California Gold Rush, Jack's aunt is forced to sell her beloved mansion to meet her debts. She is still unable to raise enough money to pay her creditors, and twelve-year-old Jack goes to California in search of gold to help her. Joined by his trusty butler, Praiseworthy, Jack finds adventure and trouble at every turn. Will Jack strike gold in San Francisco or come home empty-handed? This new edition features illustrations by Brett Helquist.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 730L (What's this?)

Paperback: 224 pages

Publisher: Little, Brown Books for Young Readers; Reprint edition (April 30, 1988)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0316286125

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Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 0.8 x 7.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 3.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (127 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #12,707 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #14 in [Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > United States > Westerns](#) #21 in [Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > United States > 1800s](#) #276 in [Books > Children's Books > Classics](#)

Age Range: 9 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

Customer Reviews

When I was nine, I read this book. At age 40, I read the same copy to my children, ages ten and eight. As much as I enjoyed reading it the first time, reading it out loud was a much richer experience. The writing flows naturally, and encourages a great variation in expression. The adventure truly comes out in the reader's voice. I am an actor, but I felt that this story would bring out the actor in anybody. The story was so exciting and surprising that long reading sessions never dragged. At several points, my children threw themselves down on the floor and yelled, "Oh my gosh!" This experience brought it all together for me, if I may speak personally: books, performing, involvement with my children, a classic story that I relished as a child myself. Those evenings added up to the happiest time of my life. The plot concerns a boy who runs away during the California gold

rush--with his butler!--to try to get his family out of debt. The adventures along the way are episodic, and each episode is an amazing and believable story in itself. Every step in the journey is given full attention: the voyage from Boston to San Francisco, the trip to the gold fields, the experiences among the miners. There are plenty of colorful characters, and plenty of opportunities for the two main characters to grow. There are also several threads that run through the whole story, maintaining suspense. Their resolution is unpredictable and satisfying. There was very little in the book that could make a parent squirm, and very little that sounded out of date. But there were three moments that made me pause: 1) There is a fist fight, though it is handled in a light-hearted way. 2) There is a reference to corporal punishment when an adult threatens to "take a hairbrush" to a child.

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