

Yew Nork Tims



International news network

"A suspense thriller, survival story, and a story of the love between brothers. You'll turn the pages—and be surprised again and again." —Gary D. Schmidt, Newbery Honor Award-winning author

96 MILES



J. L. ESPLIN



96 Miles Book Review

Sources say: “not great but not horrible”

Tim Timson
Digital Reporter

Drumroll for book of the year written by someone named J.L Esplin. 96 miles wins because J.L Esplin has yet to write another book. And the Tims are conflicted on whether that’s a bad thing.

J.L Esplin is an author who wrote 96 Miles. It was published in 2020 when most people were looking for an escape from misery and tragedy.

More about J.L Esplin was found at Macmillan publishing website and I quote “*J. L. ESPLIN grew up with a Secret Service agent father, who was intent on raising self-reliant kids, prepared for any emergency, especially natural disasters. She lives in Las Vegas, Nevada, on the edge of town with her husband and kids. 96 Miles is her first novel. When not writing, she enjoys teaching guitar the fun way, traveling to new places, and coming back home to the desert.*”

Now I have no clue what teaching guitar “the fun way?” means but all I’m sure of is that I do not negotiate with terrorists. Besides that

I believe this is a very well made self description.

We tried to email Miss Esplin’s agent to answer a few questions but they never answered or didn’t answer in a timely manner. I take this as a sign of disrespect towards our incredibly prestigious and important journalism agency. (I mean we are so cool!) We challenge Miss Esplin to a bare knuckle fist fight with no moves barred with our new intern Tim Thompson. Winner gets bragging rights and an official US Contract declaring you are cooler than us.

Now besides Miss Esplin herself I believe that we should talk about the book itself because that’s the entire point of this article. The rest was filler until we got to the meat of this article.

96 miles stars John and Stewart, the Lockwood brothers. Jim Lockwood (their dad) is a widower and had gone on a business trip before disaster hit.

The power and water went out in multiple states including Nevada. Where the Lockwoods live. There’s a town meeting later on where we meet the neighbors. They ask everyone to contribute anything they can with a checklist. Luckily the Lockwood brothers were prepared because their dad was a survivalist.

But then their house gets robbed by a couple of vagrants.

So they decided to leave for Brighton ranch and prep by going to an abandoned house and ready toilet water to boil and drink.

They found 2 kids in the house named Will and Cleverly who came along.

Average survival stuff for a while and then they see a truck pass coming along so they stop it and ask them for help. Inside the car is a pregnant woman and a man they nicknamed killer. They noticed they had their gas can so they realized it was the same person from the group who robbed their house. He tries to defuse the situation but the man robs the kids again with a shotgun. So they realized they were running out of water so they change the plan to make it to the reservoir

John believes that they wouldn't make it together so John and Cleverly go together to the reservoir and find Killer and the vagrant's trucks so they go to steal the truck instead.

They overhear on the radios that military was blocking entrance to Nevada so Jimmy couldn't get into Nevada even if he wanted to.

So they pop the tires of the other trucks and try to Hotwire Killer's truck

John's hand starts bleeding but he Hotwires it successfully

But Killer noticed and punches John but they successfully drive away

They notice they have no gas but go pick up Stew and Willis

Stew is angry because they left without him because he's a big baby

They leave and make it far enough that they are only 23 miles away from Brighton ranch

Stewart starts throwing up

IT IS ONLY NOW REVEALED HE HAS TYPE ONE DIABETES AND HAS GONE 2 DAYS WITHOUT INSULIN.

John leaves for Brighton ranch alone and runs every other mile

He makes it there because one of the family members has diabetes so they can help Stew.

The brother of the family member tells John to leave with shotgun

But John doesn't go down without a fight so he fights the brother

John is about to die

Suddenly the lights come on

The powers back on

He passes out

He wakes up and realizes he was supposed to be back hours ago

The family member drives John back to Stew

They save Stew and happy ever after

Now that's a pretty condensed version of the book.

It won a William Allen White Award which is an award that's existed since 1952 (oldest book award) where school children from Kansas vote on their favorite books and it is used to celebrate William Allen White's writing career.

Now that's all well and good but this book is something I don't believe deserves to have the award. I think the book is fine. That's it. It never wowed me, it was just another book... I believe it could be compared to those romantic novels that have a big big burly cowboy in it. It was

something I had to read but wasn't motivated to read. I feel as though the flash backs were clunky and missing the chance to make diabetes an ongoing issue throughout the book was a mistake. I couldn't tell what was a flashback and what was the present and will was criminally unused and was more of comedy relief than a character.

My overall thoughts were it was fine, but it was something you'd read once and shelve. You wait for a crazy plot twist but it never comes.

But I still can appreciate the book for its thoughtful simplicity and I might be a bit salty because I'm writing this at 9:15 pm but I think I could simplify my thoughts better here:

It makes you think about humanity and the preciousness of life but not enough to make you ponder for a long time because it wasn't meant to be sophisticated, it was meant to be a book for middle schoolers which is where I think the book falls flat. Instead of letting you come to that conclusion, the spoon feeds it to you. I believe J.L Esplin has a promising career but this book was not good. It was a kindergarten teacher trying to teach a college. More of a fine than a great.
5.5/10