



BOOK RESUME: WHAT ABOUT WILL

BOOK SYNOPSIS

From #1 *New York Times* bestselling author Ellen Hopkins comes a new heartbreakingly tender middle grade novel in verse about the bonds between two brothers and the love they share.

Twelve-year-old Trace Reynolds has always looked up to his brother, mostly because Will, who's five years older, has never looked down on him. It was Will who taught Trace to ride a bike, would watch sports on TV with him, and cheer him on at Little League. But when Will was knocked out cold during a football game, resulting in a brain injury--everything changed. Now, seventeen months later, their family is still living under the weight of "the incident," that left Will with a facial tic, depression, and an anger he cannot always control, culminating in their parents' divorce. Afraid of further fracturing his family, Trace begins to cover for Will who, struggling with addiction to pain medication, becomes someone Trace doesn't recognize. But when the brother he loves so much becomes more and more withdrawn, and escalates to stealing money and ditching school, Trace realizes some secrets cannot be kept if we ever hope to heal.

REVIEWS AND PRAISE

★ "Hopkins's heartrending novel in verse evocatively conveys Trace's attempts to call attention to Will's dangerous behavior and his yearning to "fix" his broken family. Standout supporting characters include Mr. Cobb, Trace's Vietnam veteran neighbor, and Catalina, a new girl on his baseball team. . . the verse format suits Trace's first-person narrative; its brevity cuts to the heart of Trace's raw feelings of isolation and powerlessness. . . A realistic, emotionally charged portrait of a family divided and their fragile steps toward a shared future. Recommended for middle grade collections."—*School Library Journal*, starred review

"Written in her recognizable free-verse style, Hopkins conveys the raw and realistic emotions of a broken family. The book covers multiple tough subjects . . . in a manner that is digestible for a younger audience. What about Will is a story about family, love, loss, hope, and understanding that you don't have to go through hardships alone."—*Booklist*

"The fears of stable, straight-arrow athlete Trace are clarified in lovely sparks of concrete poetry among Hopkins' free verse, as he learns to tell adults when he sees his beloved brother acting dangerously. Compassionate optimism for a boy who can't control the chaos around him."—*Kirkus Reviews*

Title: What About Will

Author: Ellen Hopkins

Imprint: Nancy Paulsen Books

Publisher: Penguin Young Readers

On sale date: September 14, 2021

ISBN: 9780593108642 and 9780593108666

Format: Hardcover and Paperback

Age Range*: 10 Up

Grade Range: Gr 5 Up

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Penguin Random House

Contact BannedBooks@penguinrandomhouse.com

*Publisher suggested age range covers the wide range of readers publishers envision using the book, whether for independent reading, family sharing, group study, or in other ways. Educators have the best sense of the appropriate range for their diverse learners they work with and understand these ranges vary depending on a book's intended use.

“In effective verse, Hopkins (Closer to Nowhere) tells an honest and moving portrait of a family in flux as they navigate newfound emotional and physical distance...Hopkins tenderly portrays a younger brother learning to advocate for himself and those he loves by speaking up and asking for help.”—*Publishers Weekly*

“A gentle, but honest, look at depression and addiction that also models positive responses and community support. For fans of *Ghost* by Jason Reynolds and *Before the Ever After* by Jaqueline Woodson, *What About Will* is important and moving.”—YALSA, on audiobook edition

“Heartfelt novel in verse.”—*Forbes*

AWARDS AND ACCOLADES

- A Bank Street Best Children’s Book of the Year
- A YALSA Best Fiction for Young Adults Pick
- A Great Lakes Great Books Nominee (MI)
- A Camellia Children’s Choice Book Award Nominee (AL)
- Young Hoosier Book Award, Middle Grade Books (IN)
- SD Teen Choice Award-- Middle School, Grades 6-8 (SD)

MEDIA AND RESOURCES

- [TeachingBooks.net resources](#)
- [SLJ Battling Literary Censorship Interview with Author](#)
- [S&S Interview with Author](#)
- [Girls in the Stacks Interview with Author](#)
- [Nineteen Questions Interview with Author](#)

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