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HarperCollins Paperback 0064400204

Reader's Guide: Sounder by William H. Armstrong

A Newbery Award Winner

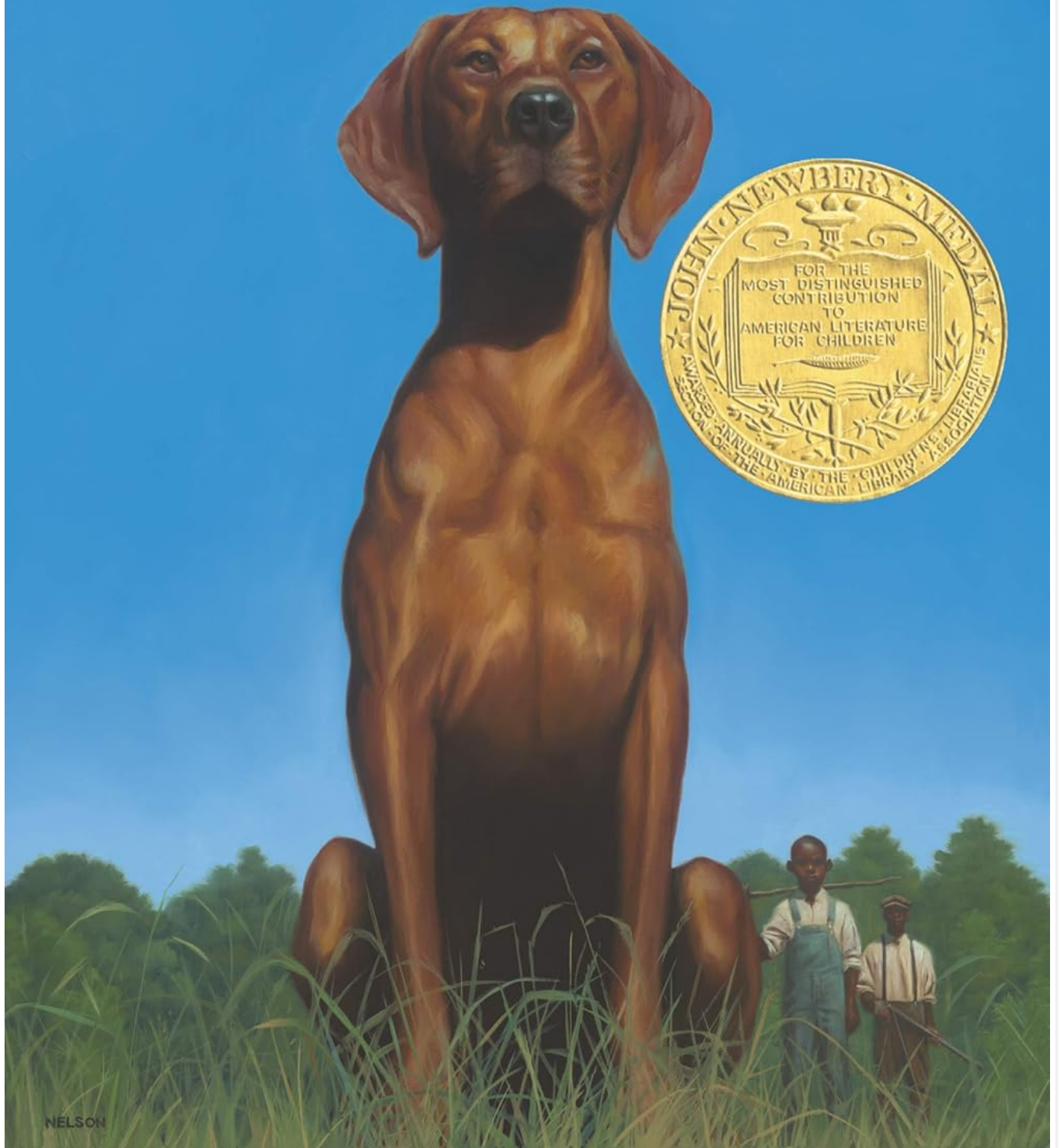
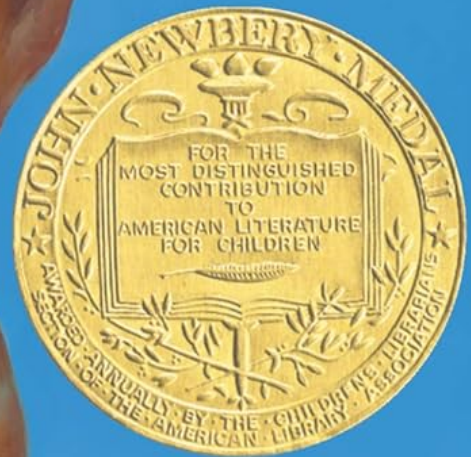
INTRODUCTION TO SOUNDER

Sounder is a Newbery Medal-winning classic novel by William H. Armstrong. It explores themes of courage, faith, and the enduring bond between a family and their dog amidst challenging circumstances. The narrative centers on a young boy whose family faces hardship, particularly after his father is taken away. The story highlights the boy's journey of resilience and hope, sustained by his connection with their faithful coon dog, Sounder.

FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

Sounder

WILLIAM H. ARMSTRONG



NELSON

Image: The cover of "Sounder" by William H. Armstrong, depicting a brown dog in a field with two human figures in the distance under a blue sky.

UNDERSTANDING THE NARRATIVE

To fully engage with **Sounder**, consider the following aspects:

Historical Context

The story is set in the American South during the late 19th or early 20th century, a period marked by sharecropping, racial injustice, and economic hardship for many African American families. Understanding this historical backdrop is crucial for appreciating the characters' struggles and resilience.

Character Focus

- **The Boy:** The unnamed protagonist, whose perspective guides the narrative. His journey reflects themes of growth, perseverance, and the search for knowledge.
- **Sounder:** The family's loyal coon dog, whose unwavering devotion and resilience mirror the family's own struggles and spirit.
- **The Father:** A sharecropper who makes a desperate choice to feed his family, leading to profound consequences.
- **The Mother:** A source of strength, faith, and wisdom for the family, particularly for the boy.

THEMES AND INTERPRETATION

Sounder explores several significant themes:

- **Love and Loyalty:** The deep bond between the family members and with Sounder is central to their survival and emotional well-being.
- **Injustice and Resilience:** The story confronts the harsh realities of racial discrimination and poverty, showcasing the characters' enduring spirit in the face of adversity.
- **Hope and Education:** The boy's desire for knowledge and his encounters with a kind teacher represent a path towards a different future.
- **Loss and Grief:** The narrative unflinchingly portrays the pain of separation and loss, both human and animal.

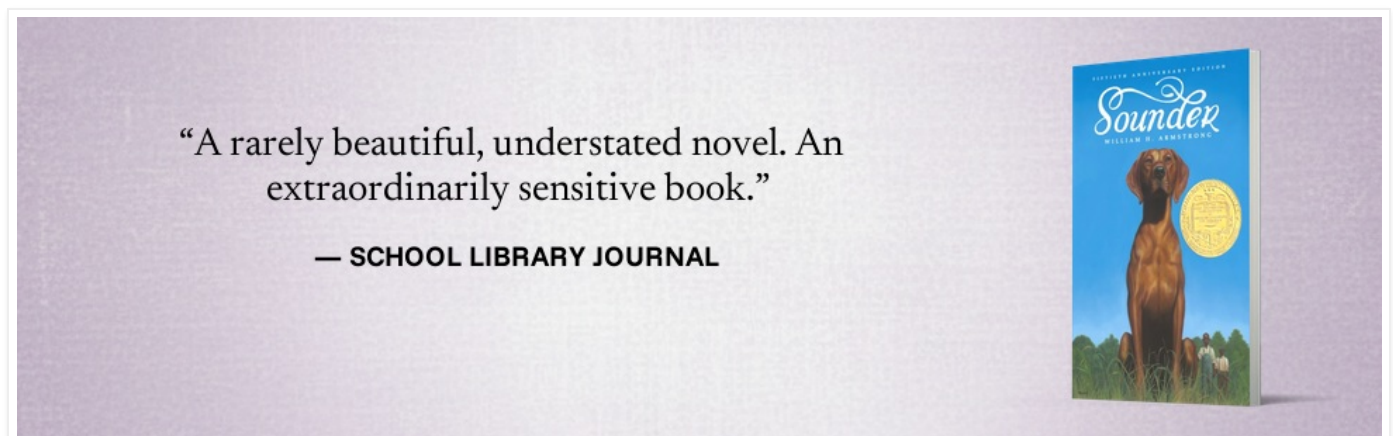


Image: A promotional image featuring a quote from School Library Journal: "A rarely beautiful, understated novel. An extraordinarily sensitive book."

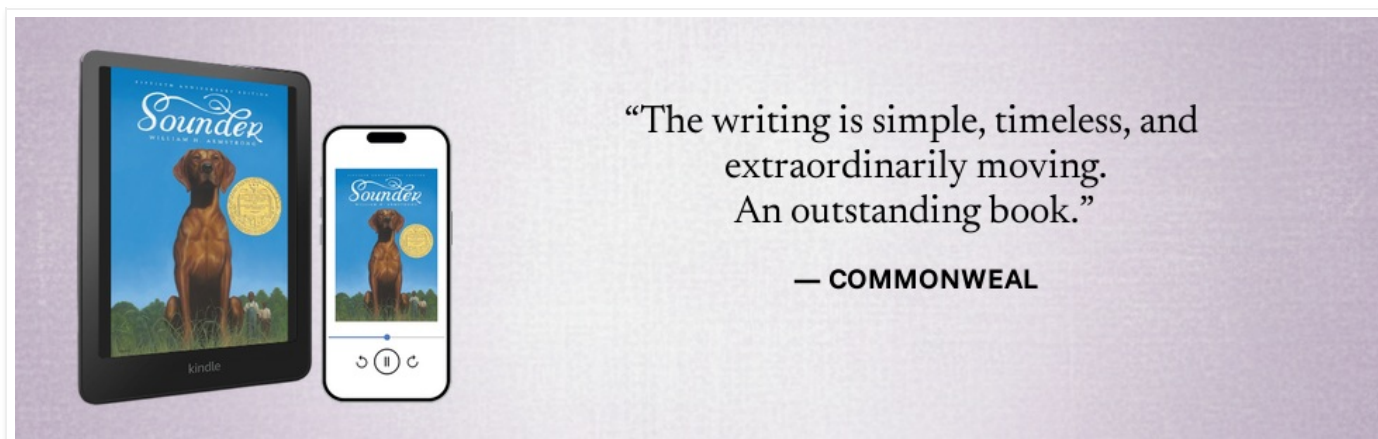


Image: A promotional image displaying a quote from Commonweal: "The writing is simple, timeless, and extraordinarily moving. An outstanding book." The image also shows the book cover on a Kindle e-reader and a smartphone, indicating digital availability.

CARING FOR YOUR COPY

To ensure the longevity and readability of your paperback copy of **Sounder**:

- Store the book in a cool, dry place away from direct sunlight to prevent fading and warping.
- Avoid bending the spine excessively to preserve its structural integrity.
- Handle pages carefully to prevent tears or creases.
- Keep the book away from liquids and food to avoid stains.

SPECIFICATIONS

Title	Sounder: A Newbery Award Winner
Author	William H. Armstrong
Illustrator	James Barkley
Publisher	HarperCollins
Publication Date	June 9, 1995
Format	Paperback
Language	English
Print Length	116 pages
ISBN-10	0064400204
ISBN-13	978-0064400206
Reading Age	9 - 12 years
Grade Level	5 - 7
Dimensions	5.12 x 0.26 x 7.62 inches
Item Weight	2.31 pounds

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

William H. Armstrong (1911-1999) was an American author and educator. He taught ancient history and study techniques for over five decades. **Souder**, published in 1969, earned him the prestigious John Newbery Medal in 1970 for its distinguished contribution to American literature for children. His work is celebrated for its powerful storytelling and exploration of complex human experiences.

James Barkley is the illustrator for this edition of **Souder**.

FURTHER READING AND RESOURCES

For those interested in exploring similar themes or learning more about the historical period, consider these resources:

- Works by other Newbery Medal-winning authors.
- Historical texts or documentaries on sharecropping and the post-Reconstruction era in the American South.
- Other classic dog stories such as *Old Yeller* or *Where the Red Fern Grows*
- Educational guides and discussion questions available from the publisher or literary organizations.



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