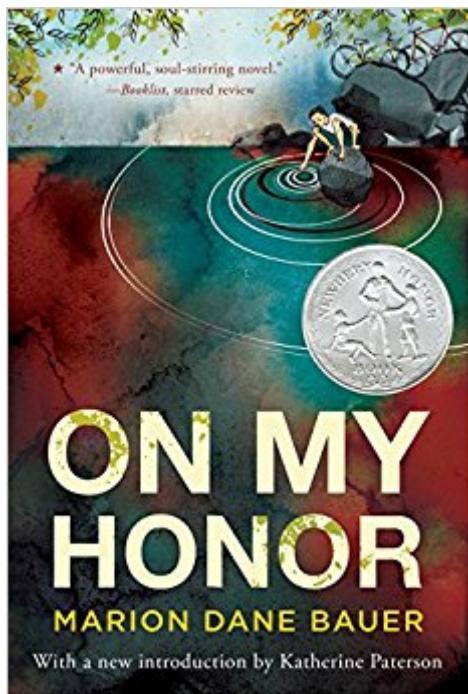


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# On My Honor



## Synopsis

Joel's best friend, Tony, is a daredevil. It was Tony's idea to make the long bike ride to the Starved Rock state park, and Tony's idea to stop for a swim in the dangerous Vermillion River. So why does Joel feel so much guilt when tragedy strikes? The paperback features a beautiful new cover and introduction by Katherine Paterson, author of the Newbery Medal-winning book *Bridge to Terabithia*.

## Book Information

Paperback: 96 pages

Publisher: HMH Books for Young Readers; Reissue edition (August 7, 2012)

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Product Dimensions: 5.1 x 0.2 x 7.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 2.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 237 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #46,588 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #60 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Death & Dying #150 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Friendship, Social Skills & School Life > Boys & Men #203 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > Parents

Age Range: 10 - 12 years

Grade Level: 5 - 7

## Customer Reviews

This is a devastating but beautifully written story of a boy's all-consuming guilt over the role he plays in the death of his best friend. Joel and Tony have been together since they were babies. Although Tony's crazy jokes and wildness sometimes make Joel feel as if he were much older, and even make Joel angry, no one is as exciting as Tony. But when Tony suggests they climb the bluffs at Starved Rock, Joel is frightened, knowing how dangerous the bluffs are. He's also afraid of Tony's sharp tongue, though, so he asks his father for permission to ride his bike to Starved Rock, certain that his father will say no. When his father says yes, Joel finds himself riding Tony's old, beat-up bike while Tony coasts along on Joel's 10-speed out to the state park. Halfway there the boys cross the Vermillion River, and Tony, who earlier had refused to go swimming at the pool with Joel, decides to swim in the river instead. Angry at Tony's lack of sense the river is both dangerous and

dirty Joel dares Tony to race out to a distant sandbar with him. Then the unthinkable occurs: Joel reaches the sandbar; Tony disappears. The realization slams into Joel with its hideous finality. Tony is dead, and it is all his fault. Joel's efforts to cope with his staggering sense of guilt are handled with stark reality, so that the reader shares his sense of the enormity of life's unfairness. Yet within Joel's first perception of the total uncertainties of life, there is also the steadfastness of his father's love. While there is death, there is also love, and Bauer's honest and gripping novel joins the ranks of such as Katherine Paterson's *Bridge to Terabithia* in its handling of these issues. Copyright 1986 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Grade 4-6 Twelve-year-old Joel has unwillingly agreed to bike out to the state park with his daredevil friend Tony. "On his honor," he promises his father to be careful, knowing that Tony wants them to climb the dangerous park bluffs. When they arrive, however, Tony abruptly changes his mind and heads for the river. With his promise jangling in his mind, Joel follows Tony in for a swim. Tony drowns in the dirty, turbulent water, leaving Joel to face his guilty conscience, and his father, alone. In this short but solid novel, Bauer effectively portrays the dilemma of pre-adolescents, old enough to want to meet their own challenges without adult interference, young enough to want grownup protection and reassurance. Joel understands only too well the moral dilemma he faces, but he is so bound by peer pressure that wrong choices and tragedy are almost inevitable. Bauer's association of Joel's guilt with the smell of the polluted river on his skin is particularly noteworthy. Its miasma almost rises off the pages. Descriptions are vivid, characterization and dialogue natural, and the style taut but unforced. A powerful, moving book. Barbara Hutcheson, Greater Victoria Public Library, Canada Copyright 1986 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This was a teen book club choice for us. There is a lot to discuss. The storyline is very thought-provoking. Who is at fault? Would you blame yourself? The teens were a quieter more thoughtful group after discussing this book.

This was a book which taught a powerful lesson of what our honor means. Although my son is 14 years old, he and I enjoy being read to and it was my turn to read to him. He asked I read this every night until we finished it. It was a quick read and opened a meaningful discussion of not only the power of words but the consequences of keeping or not keeping our word. Since reading this book, every now and then when he promises me something, he'll look over at me with a sly smile and say

"On My Honor" and I know it means something. This was a very good book, somewhat predictable but yet gripping.

Often selected in my 8th grade classroom by reluctant readers for its brevity, On My Honor has an emotional impact not anticipated by the students. It is often the turning point for helping those reluctant readers think of reading as interesting instead of boring. Sarah

The students love this book!

Good Read

I read this book many years ago, and it still haunts me. Two best friends, dishonesty, peer pressure, shock and horror, and finally soul-crushing guilt - it's all here. An exceedingly harsh life lesson. Have your tissues ready!

A++++

This book was a suggested reading for my 11 yr old Granddaughter who will be starting Middle School this fall. So I read it first and I thought it was excellent. It is about taking a stand for what is right, not giving in to pressure from your peers to do something you know is wrong. It was a little sad because of the choice one boy made. Jennifer read it and she like it and she doesn't like to read. If you have a child 9 and above, I recommend this book as one to read and discuss.

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