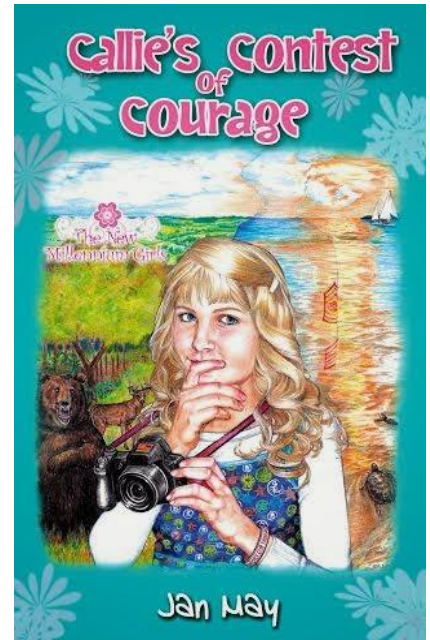


Review "Callie's Contest of Courage" by Amy Bradsheer at a Nest in the Rock Blogspot

I'm always on the lookout for positive, adventurous books for my kids - especially ones with characters who possess a strong and growing faith. Unfortunately, those are not very easy to find.



But recently I hit the jackpot.

Jan May sent me a copy of her newly released book, *Callie's Contest of Courage*, and I was most impressed.

Callie's Contest of Courage is the story of Callie, a tween girl who loves animals, runs her own website, and wants to enter a photography contest in the hopes of winning an internship to work with animals. Unfortunately, her dad serves in the military and is sent away on active duty while she's preparing. When the news reports heavy action from his area and he stops communicating, Callie must exercise her faith to stay strong - especially when even the little things in her life seem to go all wrong, too.

Callie is the kind of character whom your daughter will want to befriend and you'll be happy to have her imitate. She's strong, smart, and kind, and she obviously is a kid with a strong faith of her own. She reads

scripture, knows scripture, and thinks about scripture - which is not to say that she's perfect. She has her typical dramatic episodes and selfish moments, but she deals with the aftermath of her emotions in a wise, mature way - at least, she does that eventually. Kids will be able to relate to her turmoil and selfishness and will learn from her revelations and apologies.

Most kids like animals, and Callie's interaction with the animal kingdom keeps the reader entertained throughout the story. From cute lambs to wild bears, there are fun stories and useful, educational information. This adds an element of kid-friendly excitement to the story.

I especially enjoyed the military aspect of the story. While children of servicemen or women might be able to relate to this story very well, it also opens up an avenue of conversation with our kids about these people who are serving our country despite the danger and hardship - and what their families might experience while they're deployed. The book also contains service project ideas, so you can take the whole story a step further and do your own mission project - or organize one on a larger scale.

And that's not the only extension activity possible in the book. May includes other types of activities, as well, that would be great for any kid to do. If your child is in a book club, however, you could plan the meeting with some of the activities found in the back of the book and be done - the work has been done for you! The ideas are creative, fun, and use common household materials, so while they

do vary in scale, the variety ensures you'll find something you can do.

This is definitely going on the list for my daughter's book club next year. I am very impressed with the creativity, independent spirit, and faith of Callie, and I'll be looking into Jan May's other books. This is the kind of story I want on my daughter's bookshelf - and I'm sure you will, too.