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# The Last Fifth Grade Of Emerson Elementary



## Synopsis

Laura Shovan's engaging, big-hearted debut is a time capsule of one class's poems during a transformative school year. Families change and new friendships form as these terrific kids grow up and move on in this whimsical novel-in-verse about finding your voice and making sure others hear it. Eighteen kids, one year of poems, one school set to close. Two yellow bulldozers crouched outside, ready to eat the building in one greedy gulp. But look out, bulldozers. Ms. Hill's fifth-grade class has plans for you. They're going to speak up and work together to save their school.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: NP (What's this?)

Hardcover: 256 pages

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Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars See all reviews (52 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #50,721 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #139 in Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Poetry > Stories In Verse #698 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Friendship, Social Skills & School Life > School

Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

## Customer Reviews

I received an ARC of this book in exchange for an honest review. There comes a time in every reader's life when they must get a certain novel which by definition does not fit inside their comfy world of what they typically do read, but manages somehow to turn into a book they need. I will not lie, the rhyming style of novels put in verse was something I tried to avoid. They frightened me at first. My introduction to this world just so happened to be *The Last Fifth Grade of Emerson Elementary*. Right as I started reading this, my fears were soon abated. I could not stop absorbing all what Shovan had created. Each page a child, each child a voice so different from the rest, and every single one had thoughts they needed to express. Their fears and dreams and thoughts on how their

school is being taken away from every one of them; the school board has forsaken all hopes of saving their fifth grade, but this class won't concede, because they aim to show their town their school is still in need. I will not spoil the ending (that would simply lack all prudence), but rest assured my heart is full of pride for these great students. And also for the author and the way she has convinced me that books in verse are such a gorgeous way to tell a story.

This book! How I wish it had existed when I was in grade school. Shovan's ability to bring 18 5th graders to life through various styles of poetry is magnificent. That we're journeying with them through the normal trials and tribulations of growing up, with pressures and losses unique for some and universal nonetheless--loss, change, fears, while the entire group is saying goodbye to elementary school and the school building itself is remarkable. This is a unique book with plenty to smile at, cheer for, and yes, cry over. (My goodness, toward the end I had to be in arm's reach of the tissue box.) Awesome bonus: end sections with poem definitions/how-tos and prompts!

I love novels in verse, and this one offered such a wide array of poetic form that it was truly impressive. The reader can't help but follow each student's story with interest as they face the dilemma that their school may shut down forever--a truly frightening prospect for students of any age! Perfect for readers who'd like to explore verse with a heartfelt story, Shovan's debut will grab students' attention and hold it as they wait to find out if this will be THE LAST FIFTH GRADE OF EMERSON ELEMENTARY. (Plus, there are resources to write poems with your class in the back of the finished copy!)

So my new favorite first line ever is in Laura Shovan's THE LAST FIFTH GRADE OF EMERSON ELEMENTARY--voice and character and rhythm all in two words! (which words? you have to read to find out!) And the rest of the book did not disappoint. I was teary eyed at page two but giggling again soon after, and OMG MS. HILL! It was a true joy getting to know each student through their poems, and you feel for all of them as the larger story unfolds. Some poems stand out in my memory as my absolute favorites: "Where They Live" broke my heart. "Four Square" is a masterpiece. But on every page was some new gem. Pay attention to the last lines on both page 52 and 53--solid gold and both in totally different ways--and Sydney's poem on November 17th. The ending of INSUBORDINATE was incredible, and Mark's poem about the Stargrams made my heart soar. When I finished THE LAST FIFTH GRADE OF EMERSON ELEMENTARY, I was filled with hope and touched with sorrow, just like growing up. Also I may have lost my heart to Jason

Chen. The ARC which I received for review included an amazing guide to poetry in the back matter. Great for discussions!

I was initially going to pass on this book, but one of my fellow Vine teacher's gave it a great review. I tend to love novels done in verse, but I would say that this is not really what this book is. This is a collection of poems and journal entries from the last fifth grade class at Emerson Elementary school. The school is going to be torn down and a grocery store is going to be built in its place. The students really want to save their school, so they do just about everything they can. That's the overall story, but really this is a showcase of student writing. Each student, to levels of success, pours themselves into the writing in front of them. They have different types of poems (possibly used as assignments) and descriptions of those assignments in the back. There is a picture noting each child so that you can keep track of them as they write. Some of the students have a lot more to say than others, and that is what I think really makes this special. These are real children writing about their experiences and this reflects a real classroom. There are very, very few books that represent so well.

I really enjoyed this book. It is comprised of poems from 18 different voices--the fictional characters in Mrs. Hill's fifth grade class. The story of the final fifth grade class that will go through Emerson Elementary is told through the voices of the students. I think Laura Shovan did a remarkable job of presenting the points of views of youngsters in a way that is believable and relate-able. While I thought some of the poems were better than others, overall, I think she did an excellent job of writing poetry that is accessible to young readers. As a middle school language arts teacher, I see lots of potential for classroom readings and discussions that could be based on individual poems, smaller groups of them, or the book as a whole. I'm looking forward to sharing some of these vignettes with my students.

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