

Reviews of *Elfie: Adventures on the Midwest Frontier*
By Mary Nelson Keithahn
Illustrated by Katie Kangas

I have read your entire book and I found it to be delightful. I wanted to continue to read chapter after chapter. I think students will enjoy reading it as well.

I did several readability tests, of page 85, 67, and 55. It comes up at varying levels but mostly grade 5. This is nice because we teach history in grade 5 so the readability would work out nicely. It would also be a good book for younger children, even though it may have to be read to them. It would be a good read aloud book to improve listening comprehension for the younger grades. I believe it will maintain their interest. I also see many opportunities to spring board from for writing exercises.

The length of the chapters is nice also. A student could easily read and then respond to the text within a reading period. The questions after each chapter were thought provoking and mostly of higher order thinking. Teachers will love that!

It is also formatted well. A teacher could easily "jigsaw" the text without compromising the story. (It is a reading strategy that breaks the text down assigning different parts to different students.) This strategy would also give students a chance to dialogue with their classmates about what they have read.

Mari Lu Martens
Elementary school principal

I can see *Elfie* being a terrific addition to a curriculum unit on pioneer life. When I was the K-5 librarian in two Missouri elementary schools, the fourth grades studied Laura Ingalls Wilder in great depth because the family settled in Missouri. I purchased many titles dealing with this time frame and they were popular with the students. Here in Oregon, pioneer life, especially along the Oregon Trail, is a focus and I would imagine the same is true in the other Midwest states studying western migration. There would be a market for this book.

The questions at the end of the chapters encourage discussion and are relevant to the subject of the chapter. I enjoy genealogy and find the topic of double cousins intriguing. The way in which *Elfie* is told may encourage youngsters to delve into their own family histories.

Gail Downs
School librarian, retired, and children's book author

Elfie is a delightful story of a young girl facing her life in frontier America long ago. Elfie's joys, challenges and everyday life will come alive to readers in this chapter book. Mary's use of word pictures and how she wove our American history into each chapter will make it easy for young readers to put themselves in Elfie's place. They will be able to understand and empathize

with the hardships and happy times of young Elfie.

Mary's book *Elfie* is a loving tribute, not only for her close-knit family, but also to countless other families that had ancestors that settled our country. This book will make a valuable contribution to children learning about their state history, immigration and the importance of families.

Robin Rohwer-Franson
Teacher (grades 2-7), retired

This heartwarming story, based on actual family diaries and letters, will delight and interest readers grades 3-6. Each chapter is a story based on actual events that Elfie and her family experienced as they moved throughout the Midwest.

The charming and beautiful illustrations enhance Elfie's stories.

The questions in the section, "Something to Think About," at the end of each chapter, will expand the knowledge of the American frontier for young readers, as well as for teachers, and parents.

Mary Keithahn's research into her family's history is an excellent addition to the classroom curriculum.

Katharine Busch Weiblen
Minneapolis Public Librarian, retired

I am so glad that my friend Mary Keithahn sent me her children's book *Elfie: Adventures on the Midwest Frontier*. The stories that make up this book are taken from historical events in the Loverin and Sheldon families. They are not only interesting to read but also inspire curiosity about how our country gradually spread from one coast to the other. I love the illustrations by Katie Kangas, beautifully whimsical watercolors that add quaintness and a sense of authenticity to the stories.

I can't wait for summer to arrive so that I can read the chapters aloud to my two granddaughters at our beach house. The questions at the end of each chapter will help me assess their comprehension and review previous chapters before moving on to new ones. As a former elementary school teacher, I know the importance of reading for detail and this book is a beautifully created chapter book that fills that niche. *Elfie* should find its way easily into school libraries everywhere.

John Horman
Professional educator, musician and composer