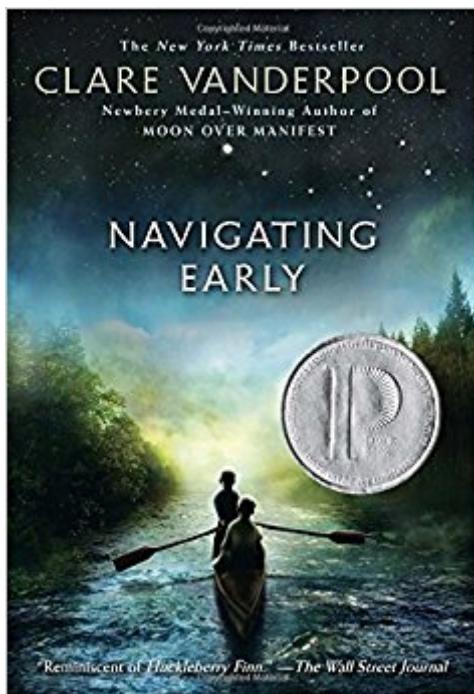


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Navigating Early



Synopsis

“Just the sort of book that saves lives by igniting a passion for reading.”
•James Patterson *Reminiscent of Huckleberry Finn.* • *The Wall Street Journal* A Michael L. Printz Honor Winner A From the author of Newbery Medal winner *Moon Over Manifest* comes the odyssey-like adventure of two boys’ incredible quest on the Appalachian Trail. When Jack Baker’s father sends him from his home in Kansas to attend a boys’ boarding school in Maine, Jack doesn’t know what to expect. Certainly not Early Auden, the strangest of boys. Early keeps to himself, reads the number pi as a story, and refuses to accept truths others take for granted. Jack, feeling lonely and out of place, connects with Early, and the two become friends. During a break from school, the boys set out for the Appalachian Trail on a quest for a great black bear. As Jack and Early travel deeper into the mountains, they meet peculiar and dangerous characters, and they make some shocking discoveries. But their adventure is only just beginning. Will Jack’s and Early’s friendship last the journey? Can the boys make it home alive? A An ALA Best Fiction for Young Adults Selection An ALA-ALSC Notable Children’s Book A New York Times Editor’s Choice A New York Times Bestseller An Indie Pick A Bank Street College of Education Best Book of the Year A School Library Journal Best Book of the Year A Kirkus Reviews Best Book of the Year A Booklist Books for Youth Editors’ Choice Selection A BookPage Best Children’s Book A Texas Lone Star Reading List Selection A Notable Children’s Book in Language Arts Book A Down East Magazine Best of Maine Book A North Carolina Young Adult Book Award Master List Selection An Iowa Children’s Choice Award Finalist From the Hardcover edition.

Book Information

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Age Range: 10 - 13 years

Grade Level: 5 and up

Customer Reviews

Best Books of the Month January 2013: In her first book since the Newbery Medal winner, *Moon Over Manifest*, Clare Vanderpool delivers another contender in *Navigating Early*. Jack and Early, outsiders at their boarding school in Maine, form a friendship that sets them on an epic quest across land, sea, and the depths of their own hearts looking for Pi—•the young seeker whose tale Early reads in the numbers following 3.14, convinced that he is lost. On their adventure they find pirates, a ferocious black bear, and finally, resolution and connection in the aftermath of a haunting loss. Vanderpool works magic in this multilayered novel of two stories—that of the boys, and that of Pi—and they dovetail beautifully throughout, culminating in an incredibly touching and gratifying ending. --Seira Wilson --This text refers to the Audio Cassette edition.

Starred Review When Jack Baker's mother dies, his father deposits him in the Morton Hill Academy for Boys in Maine, far from the only home he has ever known—•Kansas. Alone and lonely, Jack befriends Early Auden, a strange, legendary boy who understands all manner of unknowable things, from the necessity of listening to Billie Holiday on rainy days to the secrets embedded in patterns of jelly beans. Most important, Early believes the unwinding digits in the calculation of pi hold a connection to his revered older brother, lost in the war. Jack and Early set out on a mysterious journey, following Pi's story, tracking a great black bear along the Appalachian Trail, and searching for reconciliation neither knows he seeks. Along the way, they encounter a collection of characters, all of them wound up in Early's eerily prescient Pi yarn. Newbery Medal—•winning author Vanderpool's sharp, honest narrative, sparkling with the stars of the night sky, pieces together an elaborate, layered plot with precision, weaving multiple threads into a careful, tidy conclusion perfectly suited for those, like Jack and Early, who want to believe. HIGH-DEMAND BACKSTORY: Vanderpool took home the big Newbery prize for *Moon Over Manifest* (2010), making this publication—•which includes a national author tour—•a publishing event. Grades 5-8. --Thom Barthelmess --This text refers to the

Audio Cassette edition.

I really liked this book! Clare Vanderpool hit a grand slam with this offering. I hope she continues to write. She certainly has a way of gaining your attention and smoothly weaving a wonderful tale together. This originally got my attention by its name. It came up on the website. I started reading reviews and realized it may have a lot of my interests at heart. The words "navigating, great bear, pirates, stars, and pi" caught my attention like a laser. I do have a family background of seafaring (my father used to navigate by the stars) and the interest I have in astronomy puts the "great bear" in a spotlight. As a child I loved math and science so "pi" has a special significance to me. So when I started to read this and was told it was a child's book, I felt a little embarrassed to say I love it. But I do, so maybe I'm an old kid at heart. C. Vanderpool's story looks back into the past with pi's (a person) story of trying to find his way back from being lost. She frequently stitches the story back to the present and well.... I recommend highly reading it. I just don't want to say more. It was a pleasure to read and I would recommend young and old read it for yourself. One review talked of a small criticism being it was too much like her earlier work, " Moon Over Manifest". I'll let you know. I'm reading it now. So far, I love it. This woman has the gift of telling a tale that keeps you involved from start to finish with a very pleasant way of letting you escape from the everyday world we live in and travel back in time to fictional places and people. But some of it is based in reality. In fact, in the afterwards, she has a section that questions and answers what is real and what is not. In "Navigating Early", you get a feel for what it may have been like to live in a time of great war, the scars it leaves and the hopes it instills in us. In "Moon over Manifest" one senses the way it may have felt to live through a depression, the sense of wanting and the lack of modern convenience. I wish there were more I could say about it but I will just say try it for yourself. What do you think? Would "Navigating Early" make a great movie? Time may tell....

Navigating Early is a memorable story of friendship and transformation. Jack and Early becomes friends by default. They are both outsiders in their boarding school, both feeling all alone in the world and both desperate to find meaning in the tragedies they have suffered. While Jack is despondent and reclusive, Early is confident and industrious. He has a plan and nothing will distract him from achieving his goal. When Early invites Jack to join him on his quest to find the legendary old giant black bear, Jack says yes, but is not sure why. Little do either of them know, their three day journey will turn into a week long adventure of pirates, ghosts, volcanoes, hermits and, of course, the bear. Their quest is a journey of discovery: discovering how to be a friend, how to

believe in yourself and trust others, how to forgive, and most importantly, discovering your authentic self. Readers will be caught up not just in the non-stop peril of the events, but the sincerity and respect Jack and Early show each other. Early is not an easy person to like. He is so focused, he often seems to forget Jack is there. He doesn't know how to have a normal conversation, so Jack very mistakenly thinks Early doesn't listen to him. Jack is easily frustrated and quick to give up. He seems more intent on proving Early wrong, than on supporting him. Nothing like being chased by scary men with guns to help two young teens get over their differences.

This book took me a long time to get through. Not sure why. It was a little slow to begin with but once Early and Jackie get started on their adventure the speed of the story picks up. I ended up enjoying the book very much. The story of Pi in the numbers of Pi was very clever.

The interconnected story of the number Pi and the unexpected relationship of two pre-teens.

I am a teacher and I loved this book. This past year, I worked with an autistic girl of about the age of Early. I could feel how she thought by understanding Early without the labels. Clare Vanderpool made an excellent choice to not expose the "label/s" society could put on Early. The adventure is a wonderful "coming of age" book with much adventure and many GOOD lessons. Guess what? I have a boy in my middle school class next year (new assignment) and from what my new principal has told me, we will love studying this book in the coming school year. Oh, it's not just for school. "Navigating Early" is for enjoyment. I always wanted to get back to this journal and see how the boys got out of the current "pickle" and what they learned. I did not want to put my Kindle down!

This story kept me reminiscing about my own adventures as a child back in the 50's and 60's when kids could wander, explore more. Character development was well-done with supporting details and enough depth and breadth of experiences to allow the reader to identify with the protagonist. The link between pi and the story was hard to grasp at first, but as I let go of my expectations, it made more sense. Liked the closure, how the story resolved conflicts; the ending was satisfying.

I enjoy the way that Vanderpool juxtaposes the quest for a missing brother with the story of Pi, a hero who is much more than a number to Early Auden, one of the main characters. I am a language arts teacher who offered this novel to my middle school students as a literature circle choice. They all enjoyed the book, but agreed that it was hard to embrace initially. I would agree that it is a slow

start, but the pace picks up and readers are quickly captivated by the redemptive themes and the exciting quest that engulfs two boys in 1945. I think this novel is a great choice, particularly for boys who may be reluctant readers.

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