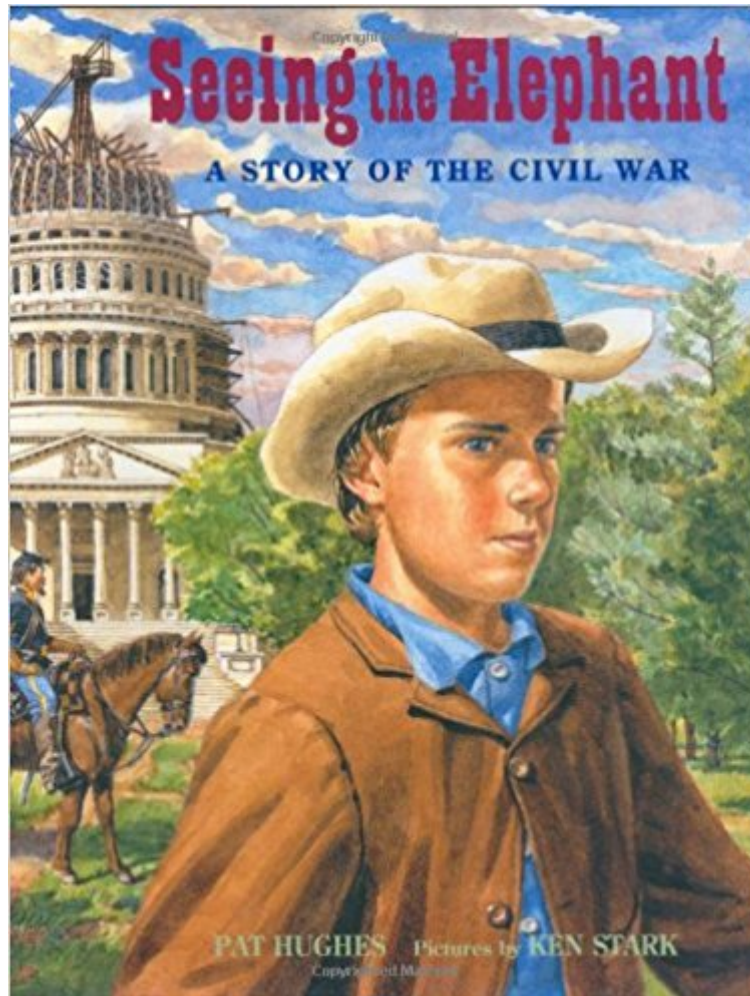




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# Seeing The Elephant: A Story Of The Civil War



## Synopsis

Young Izzie wishes he could join the Union Army with his brothers, Ario and Cal. He wonders what it would be like to "see the elephant" – a soldier talk for going into battle for the first time. But it seems the closest Izzie will ever get to battle is visiting wounded soldiers at a Washington, D.C., hospital, where his aunt works as an Army nurse. When Izzie meets a wounded Rebel soldier who will soon be sent to prison, he realizes that the war may not be as simple as he once believed, and "seeing the elephant" takes on a whole new meaning. Based on family history, Pat Hughes's beautifully crafted story is complemented by Ken Stark's exceptional watercolor paintings. *Seeing the Elephant* is a 2008 Bank Street - Best Children's Book of the Year.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 590L (What's this?)

Hardcover: 40 pages

Publisher: Farrar, Straus and Giroux (BYR); 1st edition (September 18, 2007)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0374380244

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Product Dimensions: 8.8 x 0.5 x 11.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.0 out of 5 stars 2 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #1,718,331 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #87 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Friendship, Social Skills & School Life > Tolerance](#) #906 in [Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > Military & Wars](#) #1145 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Death & Dying](#)

Age Range: 7 - 9 years

Grade Level: 3 and up

## Customer Reviews

"Presented in a clear and direct writing style, the story has an emotional power that is similar to that in Patricia Polacco's *Pink and Say*. Stark's realistic paintings are remarkable both for their artistry and their meticulous attention to historical accuracy. This book deserves a place in most collections." - School Library Journal  
National Council for Social Studies/Children's Book Council Notable Book A Bank Street Best Book – "Effective . . . This will leave readers with the

insight that no side in a conflict has a lock on right or wrong. [Kirkus Reviews](#)

PAT HUGHES is the author of three historical novels: Five 4ths of July, The Breaker Boys, and Guerrilla Season. Her contemporary young adult novel is Open Ice. She lives outside Philadelphia. KEN STARK has written and/or illustrated three previous picture books. He lives in southwestern Wisconsin.

I recently read Seeing The Elephant to my third grade class. The children loved the illustrations of life and clothing during the 1860's. The pictures of early Washington were also of high interest. The story of Izzie and his brothers during the Civil War captivated their attention. Like Izzie, my class realized that how one first perceives an enemy can change. This book was an excellent introduction for children to that period of time in our history.

Hughes, Pat. Seeing the Elephant: A Story Of The Civil War. Pictures by Ken Stark. Farrar, Straus and Giroux. 2007. A thoughtful story about a ten year old boy named Iz whose two older brothers go off to fight on the Yankee side during the Civil War; one brother Cal is raring to fight, "I'm off to see the elephant" ("Seeing the Elephant" is a euphuism for "going into battle for the first time") but gets typhoid and has to come home before fighting a battle. Iz has no doubts that the Yankees have to fight to bring the Rebels back to the Union. His Aunt Bell is a nurse and she takes Iz back with her to Washington, DC. There he meets President Lincoln at a reception; however, he also meets a rebel soldier who is in a hospital and learns that fighting a war is not just a simple issue of right and wrong. Realistic paintings full of expression and historical setting enhance the quiet strength of this story

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