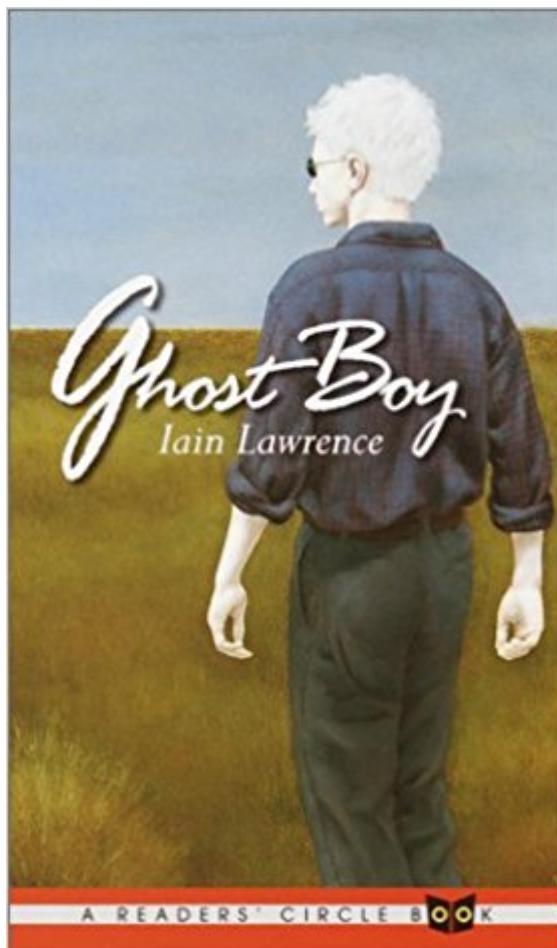


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# Ghost Boy (Laurel-Leaf Books)



## **Synopsis**

Harold Kline is an albino—â•an outcast. Folks stare and taunt, calling him Ghost Boy. It's been that way for all of his 14 years. So when the circus comes to town, Harold runs off to join it. Full of colorful performers, the circus seems like the answer to Harold's loneliness. He's eager to meet the Cannibal King, a sideshow attraction who's an albino, too. He's touched that Princess Minikin and the Fossil Man, two other sideshow curiosities, embrace him like a son. He's in love with Flip, the pretty and beguiling horse trainer, and awed by the all-knowing Gypsy Magda. Most of all, Harold is proud of training the elephants, and of earning respect and a sense of normalcy. Even at the circus, though, two groups exist—the freaks, and everyone else. Harold straddles both groups. But fitting in comes at a price, and Harold must recognize the truth beneath what seems apparent before he can find a place to call home.

## **Book Information**

Lexile Measure: 640 (What's this?)

Series: Laurel-Leaf Books

Mass Market Paperback: 352 pages

Publisher: Laurel Leaf; English Language edition (March 12, 2002)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 044041668X

ISBN-13: 978-0440416685

Product Dimensions: 4.2 x 0.7 x 6.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 6.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 35 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #493,819 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #67 in Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Runaways #103 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Runaways #514 in Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Self Esteem & Reliance

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## **Customer Reviews**

Fourteen-year-old Harold Kline is an albino--white from head to toe, even his hair and his eyes that are like drops of water. His life is made unbearable by the other kids, who call him "snow" or

"maggot," and ever since his father died and his brother was reported missing in Vietnam, his mother has become angry and withdrawn. And so Harold runs away, although it is a wrench to leave Honey, the elderly dog who has been his only comfort. And where would an albino kid on the run end up? In the circus, of course--in this case a down-at-the-heels road show where he is sheltered by a kindly lady midget and her huge man-beast companion and given hugs and unquestioning acceptance by the other "freaks." There he falls in love with the beautiful but duplicitous trick horseback rider and gains self-respect and the admiration of the other circus folks when he accomplishes the seemingly impossible feat of teaching the elephants to play baseball. But Gypsy Magda forecasts a "great harm" lurking in the future, and it has something to do with Harold's rejection of the "freaks" who have sheltered him as one of their own. In this strange, moving novel, the author of sea adventures *The Wreckers* and *The Smugglers* has built a compelling metaphor for the universal teenage fear of being declared an outsider. With great emotional veracity, Iain Lawrence plays many intriguing variations on the theme of alienation in a work full of fascinating characters, marvelous scenes, and tragic surprises. (Ages 12 and older) --Patty Campbell --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

An albino boy runs off to find comfort among the members of a circus troupe in post-WWII America. In a starred review, PW wrote, "This poignant adventure invites readers to look beyond others' outer appearances and into their souls." Ages 12-up. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc.

Can I add one more star? I didn't realize that I never got around to reviewing this book. I read it to my son 3 years ago, yet it feels like yesterday. What can I say. It's a "classic." maybe not yet, because it's somewhat new, but it will be a book that will have timeless enjoyment and depth. My son saw it in his 5th grade class room. His reading group wasn't reading it, but he wanted to, so I bought it. (He thought it was about a ghost.) It's about an albino. We ended up doing research about albino's via online, out of curiosity. This book is so fantastic, I had to buy it for my son's 6th grade teacher and my daughters current 5 grade teacher. It covers so many important topics; Segregation by choice/ and forced. Trying to fit in with groups. Crossing over social groups. Bullying and accepting people for their differences; looking deeper than skin, size, deformities or disabilities. I think ALL 5th and 6th grade teachers should read this to their class, or better yet, have the children read it in small groups with daily discussions.

I'm far beyond middle school (& middle-age) and I very much enjoyed this book. It's a little bit

fantastical and a lot thought-provoking. Aside from the well-paced plot, it was a delight to learn about the elephants and about traveling circuses of yesteryear.

I read this book years ago when I was in elementary school and decided to revisit it as an adult. There are sections of great writing (especially the descriptions) and sharp, vivid dialogue, but I thought the plot was a bit questionable. The main character disappears from his hometown to join the circus and no one really seems to notice. The book takes place decades ago--a different time, obviously--but I still thought it was strange that no one tried to find him, and the circus gave him a job as an elephant trainer despite a complete lack of experience. It's worth reading, but when it was over I wasn't sure what to make of the story.

A wonderful, rivetting book, kept me intrigued for days ( I read really GOOD books slowly, so I don't have to read it twice.) It was SO fascinating and interesting to read what the writer experienced, before he even was "awakened" per se, to begin to communicate with his family. To eventually go to school, grow up, even though severely incapacitated, study, learn, and meet someone who he eventually married. Beyond more explanation, would be terribly redundant, but he will capture your heart and stimulate your mind with his successes, and experiences. I am hoping he will eventually write another.... a sequel to the former, capturing "what all happens next." His family's tenacity and dedication are exemplary, and the main stimulus to his awakening. Very commendable parenting. I highly recommend it.

This book is one my 12 year old granddaughter had to read for her summer reading program. I read it also and thoroughly enjoyed it. The story is sad but teaches so many life lessons about treating all types of people. It is well written and easy to read.

I first read this book in my 7th grade year (I'm currently a 9th grader) and it was honestly a really helpful book for me. It was a coming of age story that honestly helped my coming of age. The main character Harold is easy to relate to even if it doesn't seem that way at first. I recommend this book to anyone and everyone I can. It's worth the buy.

GHOST BOY is a coming of age story about an albino boy who lives in a small town. The boy, Harold, is the butt of mean jokes by the local kids. When he runs away and joins the circus, he learns a lot about himself and his skills. When he returns home, he has the courage to face up to his

detractors. The author, Iain Lawrence, has done a masterful job of setting the stage, building the characters, making you want to read more. Wonderful novel for kids ages 10-14, or even adults who like good writing. ]Marge Wood

It is a good young adult book about being different and lots of other issues that young adults have to deal with.

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