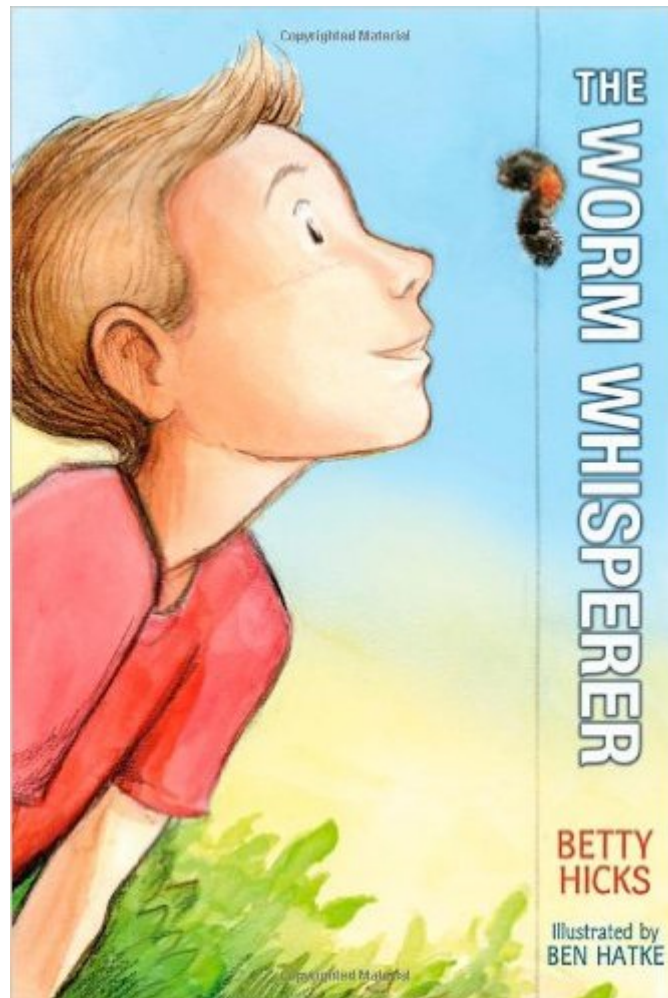


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# The Worm Whisperer



## Synopsis

You've heard of Horse Whisperers and Dog Whisperers, but Ellis thinks he might be a Worm Whisperer! Ellis Coffey loves animals. He spends so much time outdoors that sometimes he thinks he can talk with them. When he discovers a caterpillar that seems to follow his directions, he knows he has a chance to win the annual Woolly Worm race. The prize money is \$1,000--exactly the amount of the deductible for his dad's back surgery. If Ellis is right and he can train his woolly worm to be the fastest in the county, he's sure can solve all his family's problems. But when you're trying to talk to insects, nothing is as simple as it seems. From Betty Hicks, author of the Gym Shorts series for new readers, comes a story of friendship, family, and hidden talents that might be more useful than they first seemed.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 560L (What's this?)

Hardcover: 192 pages

Publisher: Roaring Brook Press (January 22, 2013)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1596434902

ISBN-13: 978-1596434905

Product Dimensions: 5.7 x 0.8 x 8.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 10.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (8 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #9,903 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #80 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > Parents](#) #379 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Friendship, Social Skills & School Life > Friendship](#) #834 in [Books > Children's Books > Animals](#)

Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

## Customer Reviews

Ellis Coffey's 4th-grade teacher has them write each other's obituaries. This is what Geroge writes about Ellis: "Ellison "Ellis" Coffey lived his whole happy life in Banner Elk, North Carolina. His family ran a blueberry farm, and that's why Ellis's fingertips looked like ink. He loved animals and insects. He was very funny and had lots of friends. Mr. Turnmire called him our class-clown-but-with-brains. The world was a better place because Ellis lived in it." Ellis's dad has a herniated disk in his back

and has to spend most of his time lying flat. His mom works two jobs, along with making blueberry muffins, pies & jam to sell at the farmer's market. Ellis's dad needs an operation, but it costs \$1,000 and they cannot afford it. Ellis finds a wooly worm (caterpillar) and it seems to respond to his words. So, Ellis decides that he is a worm whisperer and plans to enter his worm in the Wooly Worm Race. The prize is \$1,000, and if Ellis wins, he will be able to pay the deductible for his dad's surgery. This is a cute story and moves along quickly. Kids will enjoy reading about Ellis's worm training and the exciting conclusion at the race. Along the way, Ellis deals with school, bullies, friendship issues and figuring out who he is. (Library copy) Recommended to: Readers in grades 3-5 who enjoy realistic fiction stories.

This is generally a mellow and rewarding read, with a solid protagonist and a charming sort of shaggy dog tale. Our hero, Ellis, is training a Woolly Worm caterpillar for the big annual Woolly Worm race, and he really wants to win. (He needs the prize money for his family.) That's more or less the plot, but this isn't really a plot driven story. It's much more like a low key character study. Ellis's Dad has been injured and can't afford an operation, but also can't work. Money is tight. Given the target demo for this book the depiction of a hard working family with serious money problems is unusually realistic and mature. The Dad is drawn with great care and the parents' worry about the family and about how the situation will effect Ellis is a substantial underlying theme throughout the book. There is a very old-fashioned sense to the book, with the kind of family and community feel you get from such classics as "Pollyanna" and the like. Coupled with this, Ellis's friends are solid and supportive and add some warmth, but also some color and zest to the proceedings. Scenes of school and neighborhood life are presented in an idealized way, but not in a syrupy or schmaltzy way. And, since the book ends with a spirited Woolly Worm competition there is an appropriate amount of tension and excitement building up to and during the competition. So, if you'd like to try a calm, quiet book as an early reader treat, it seems that this would be a nice book to consider. Please note that I received a free advance ecopy of this book in exchange for a candid review. Apart from that I have no connection at all to the author or the publisher of this book.

Hicks' The Worm Whisperer is a great elementary read aloud. It's a heart warming story of young ellis Coffey who struggles to find his way at school and to help his family who has been struggling since his mom lost his job and his dad began having back troubles. Young readers will identify with the challenges Ellis faces at school - from becoming the class clown to dealing with a less than friendly classmate to wondering if a certain classmate likes wooly worms like he does. Adults will

appreciate Ellis' strong character and his desire to help his family. The Worm Whisperer is a strong well developed story. It is an easy read for students to read on their own or for a classroom read aloud. It would be a great companion book for a unit on animals (or worms) and would work well with character education units. Fans of Clementine and Judy Moody & Stink will enjoy this quick read. I will be adding it to the school library collection and will be putting it on my suggested 3rd, 4th and 5th Grades Summer Reading List.

My grandson's LOVED this book! It was funny and it inspired us to do a lot of research on wooly worms online.

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