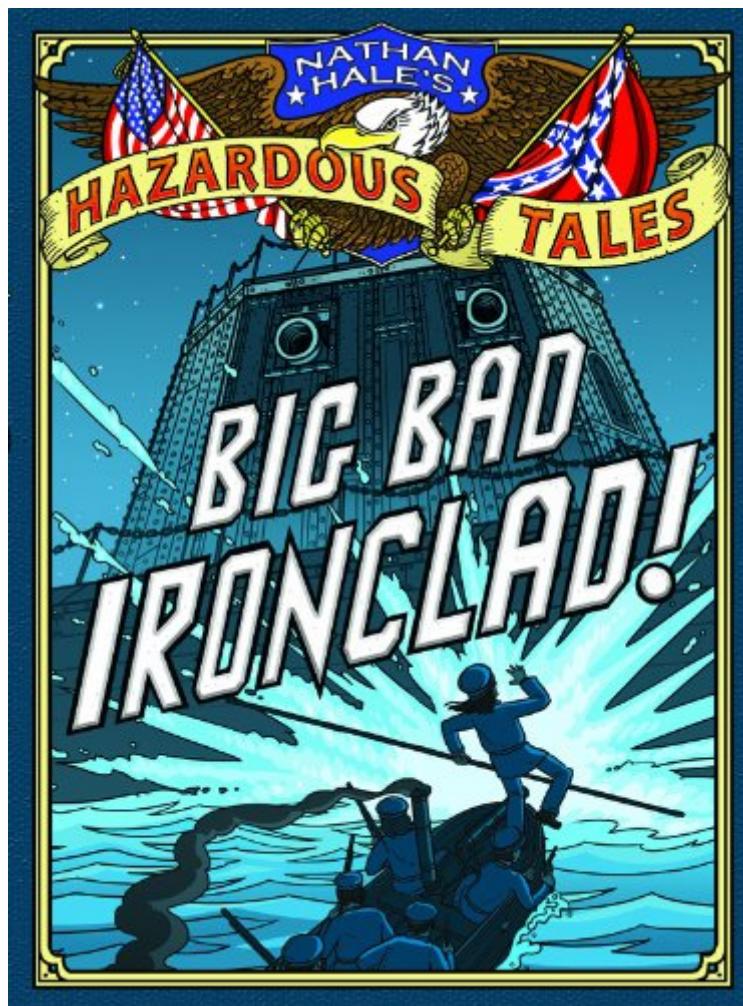


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Big Bad Ironclad! (Nathan Hale's Hazardous Tales Book 2)



Synopsis

Each of the books in Nathan Hale's Hazardous Tales has elements of the strange but true and is presented in an engaging, funny format, highlighting the larger-than-life characters that pop up in real history. *Big Bad Ironclad!* covers the history of the amazing ironclad steam warships used in the Civil War. From the ship's inventor, who had a history of blowing things up and only 100 days to complete his project, to the mischievous William Cushing, who pranked his way through the whole war, this book is filled with surprisingly true facts and funny, brave characters that modern readers will easily relate to.

Book Information

File Size: 45208 KB

Print Length: 128 pages

Publisher: Amulet Books (December 15, 2012)

Publication Date: December 15, 2012

Sold by: Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B00AOJE11Q

Text-to-Speech: Not enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Not Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Not Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #225,441 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #16

in Books > History > Americas > United States > Civil War > Naval Operations #28

in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Children's eBooks > History > United States > 1800s #32

in Books > Children's Books > Comics & Graphic Novels > History

Customer Reviews

I bought my son the Hazardous Tales series for his 8th birthday, and we have both absolutely loved them. I've never had much of an interest in war history, and would never in a million years have picked up a traditional book on naval battles of the Civil War (yawn), but this one was so entertaining and informative! I'm glad to know that my son will go into 3rd grade with a broader knowledge of American history than most adults, and I'm happy to finally be learning this stuff myself!

This series is chock-full of great stories and wonderful history. This isn't a way to trick kids to read history -- it's just good writing, accurate illustrations and a rollicking tale. As author Nathan Hale says, "It's 93% accurate" and I'll add 100% enjoyable. Fourth and fifth graders at my school devour these books, checking out the whole series and then buying them for themselves (Nathan Hale One Dead Spy; Donner Dinner Party; Treaties, Trenches, Mud and Blood (World War I); and the upcoming Underground Abductor about Harriet Tubman). Can't wait for the next two books to appear. I hear the 7th book in the series is on the drawing board, as well.

Nathan Hale has been a favorite local (Utah) author and artist for several years now. I first met him at a booksigning in suburban Salt Lake City, and casually followed what he was working on since then. Up until 2012 the highlight of his career has been the two graphic novels written by Shannon Hale (no relation): "Rapunzel's Revenge" and "Calamity Jack." Both are very entertaining takes on fairy tales, both come highly recommended by me. Hale's own series takes stories from American History and retelling them in a funny and informative way: "Nathan Hale's Hazardous Tales." The first in the series is "One Dead Spy", the account of Nathan Hale's namesake, um, Nathan Hale. The second book, also published in 2012, is "Big Bad Ironclad!" "Big Bad Ironclad" is of course a Civil War tale, about the sea battle between the Monitor and the Virginia (when I was growing up, we called that one the Merrimack), two of the first ironclad ships. The premise of this series is that each story is narrated by heroic spy Nathan Hale, delaying his own execution Sheherezade-style by telling stories from American History to his own Hangman and a British Provost. Hale (the author) plays with the idea of Hale (the spy) as an omniscient historian, who's able to tell stories that haven't happened yet, and he's balanced out by the Hangman, who's brutish but loves cute little animals, and the Provost, who reminds me of a stuffier Sam Eagle from "The Muppet Show." But...British. A brief prologue does a good job of introducing the Civil War, and even though the ironclad battle is really only one small episode within the larger conflict, the book manages to give perspective to the war. We meet Abraham Lincoln and his cabinet, we learn about General Winfield Scott's Anaconda Plan to cut off the South from any outside support, and meet Gideon Welles, Lincoln's "Father Neptune" and Secretary of the Navy. These people put the ironclad plans into motion, and does so in a quick, straightforward way that is easy for kids and teens to get onboard with. The graphic novel format keeps things moving quickly, and lets Hale play with words and images--Gideon Welles' assistant Gustavus Fox is rendered as a cute little fox, and Confederacy naval leader Stephen Mallory is shown as a "sharkface," although Hale does point out that he's not a villain so much as a

leader of the opposition. Interspersed with the main story about the building and battle of the Monitor and Virginia is the story of William Cushing--a guy I hadn't ever heard of, but a navy officer who ends up becoming the prototype for Navy SEALS. His adventures punctuate the already exciting war story, and are able to provide a continual thread that gives us insight into the other things that were happening away from the ironclads. "Big Bad Ironclad" includes biographies of the major characters in the story (so that kids can find out that Stephen Mallory wasn't really known as "Sharkface"), a bibliography that includes resources on the Ironclads, the Civil War, and some of the major characters in the book; a "Corrections Baby" page that addresses some historical discrepancies, and a Civil War timeline that points out where Will Cushing was at various points in the conflict. One of my favorite "extras" is at the bottom of the timeline, where we're shown how to build our own Monitor from a few "plastic bricks." As a die-hard LEGO fan, I was pleased to see that. This is the second of four "Nathan Hale's Hazardous Tales" books currently in stores, and the fifth is coming this spring. It can't be soon enough.

I have NEVER seen my kids so excited about getting a book in the mail, especially a book about history. This is a great way to teach history. The comic book style is great for the children that get overwhelmed with chapter books. Highly recommend!

My 2nd grader claims these graphic novels by Nathan Hale are her very favorite books! I caught her laughing out loud as she read them and heard her repeating lines to her sisters. I love that these books make history interesting and fun. We will be buying every one and waiting anxiously for each new installment.

This book is very interesting. It definitely makes US history fun. I kept reading This over and over and I Can not stop.

My 10 year old son says, "Loved the book!" Even my 9 year old couldn't put it down. So much interesting history!

The series of Nathan Hale titles has become very popular with 6th Grade boys and has been requested by them.

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