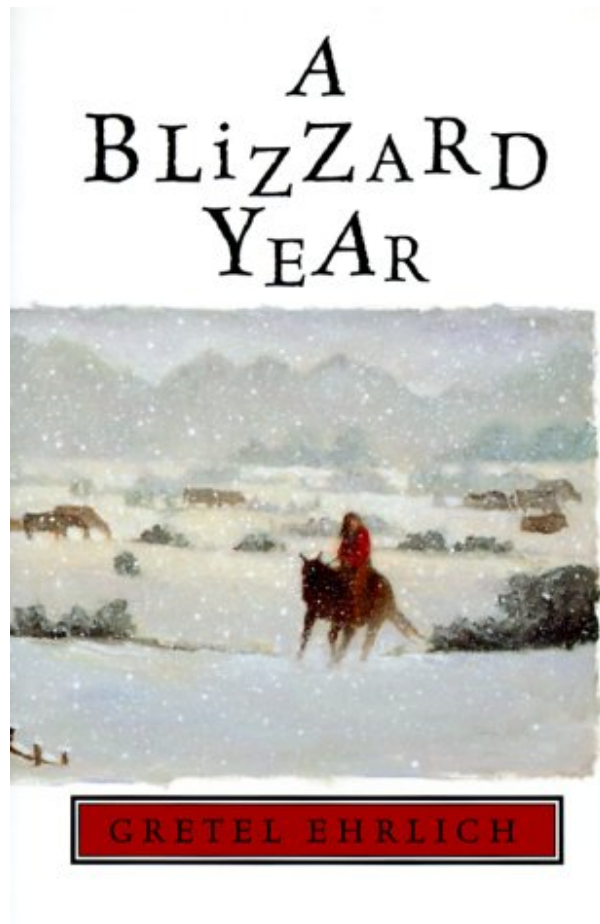


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From Publishers Weekly

Novelist, poet and nonfiction author Ehrlich (*Islands*; *The Solace of Open Spaces*) ventures confidently onto new terrain in her eloquent and affecting debut children's novel. Timmy, a 13-year-old girl who lives with her parents on a sprawling ranch in the northern Rockies, records the events of a calamitous year, during which a brutal March blizzard almost wipes out the family's cattle herd. Each chapter, named for a month, opens with a lyrical passage that sets the natural scene. In February, "Snow is polished by wind, and the world looks smooth; trees are leafless skeletons that walk around the house at night and speak in a language that sounds like cracking bones." Eclipsing Timmy's joy at the signs of spring's arrival is her fear that the bank will repossess the financially devastated ranch. Yet the family members-along with a kind ranch hand and his adopted daughter-never lose hope as they continue to care for the land and the surviving animals. Timmy's pluck and ingenuity lead to a bright resolution. Ehrlich's prose, as pristine and spare as her snow-covered landscape, portrays the quiet drama of the changing seasons-in both their constancy and unpredictability-as well as a family attuned to nature's every nuance. Ages 9-13. (Nov.)

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From School Library Journal

Grade 4-7-In diary format, 13-year-old Timmy records a difficult year for her and her family on their ranch in Wyoming. Each chapter begins with a brief poetic description of what the weather, animals, and environment are usually like in that month. Then Timmy adds her personal account of what happened during the year when late blizzards took the lives of their calves and threatened the livelihood of her family. The book is not all gloom and doom, though, as Timmy shares stories of the dances, baseball games, and other festive events that are part of her life. Her friends include Fermina, the daughter of their ranch hand; and Brandson, the son of the banker who holds her family's future in loans. The book has lengthy descriptions of the horses, cattle, and people on the ranch. Pencil drawings at the beginning of each chapter complement the descriptions. The story is a blend of old traditions mixed with a very modern solution to her family's near loss of their home. Timmy's introspection on the final page is worth reading for anyone facing a difficult time. The vivid depictions of rural life make this a great read, particularly for libraries in cowboy country.

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- Sales Rank: #8780162 in Books
- Brand: Brand: Disney-Hyperion
- Published on: 1999-10-15
- Released on: 1900-01-01
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.50" h x .50" w x 5.75" l,
- Binding: Hardcover
- 160 pages

Features

- Used Book in Good Condition

From Publishers Weekly

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Fabulous book!

By Kim

I am an elementary school librarian in Colorado and this is a terrific book for anyone who loves the outdoors and the west. The passages at the beginning of each chapter are wonderful descriptions of the changing wildlife and environment. The story is compelling and the characters are real and likeable. I don't usually post reviews like this...but I really like this book and encourage others to read it!

4 of 5 people found the following review helpful.

Book Review

By A Customer

This was a pretty interesting book. Timmy's family doesn't have a lot of money, and after a bad winter they lost quite a few animals. They cannot afford to keep their ranch. Timmy does all she can do to save her ranch, but she doesn't know how much she can do without much money. None of her family wants to leave the ranch, but pretty soon there isn't going to be a choice.

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