



Ellie's Story: A Dog Purpose Novel

By W. Bruce Cameron

Grade Levels: grades 4 – 7

Synopsis:

Who rescued who? Since she was a puppy Ellie was chosen and trained to be a search and rescue dog for Jakob. Told from her point of view, Ellie not only picks up on the scents of who she is trained to find, but she picks up on her trainer, Jakob's sadness. After Jakob is shot during a search and rescue mission she is transferred to another trainer, Maya, who also is in need of a canine friend. With Maya she goes to El Salvador on the biggest rescue mission of her life, uncovering bodies from an earthquake rubble. But what happens when a search and rescue dog loses her strong sense of smell? Find out what kind of work they can do then and an amazing miracle at the end.

Author's Website: <http://brucecameron.com/>

This is the only one of his books appropriate for this audience. His other works that are YA:

- *A Dog's Purpose*
- *A Dog's Journey*
- *The Dogs of Christmas*
- *Emory's Gift*

Curriculum Connections:

- CCSS.ELA –Literacy. RL.5.6 – Describe how a narrator's or speaker's point of view influences how events are described.
 - Students can discuss how the book would have been different if it weren't told from Ellie's point of view.
- CCSS.ELA. – Literacy. RL.5.2 – Determine the theme of a story, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges; summarize the text.
 - Students can discuss how Jakob and Maya responded to the challenges of training search and rescue dogs. They can also discuss how Ellie dealt with the challenge of losing her sense of smell.

Lesson Ideas:

- Research search and rescue dogs training. Ask inquiry questions and research to find the answers.
- Use the discussion questions in the appendix to have a literature circle discussion

Websites for research

- American Rescue Dog Association: <http://www.ardainc.org>
- National Association for Search and Rescue: <http://www.nasar.org>

Suggested Companion Titles:

Fiction:

- *Cracker* Cythia Kadohata
- *A Dog's Life* Ann Martin
- *Sheep* Valerie Hobbs
- *Mountain Dog* Margarita Engle
- *Racing in the Rain: My Life as a Dog (Young Reader's Edition)* – Garth Stein

Nonfiction:

- *Search and Rescue Dog Heroes* – Linda Bozzo
- *Search and Rescue Dogs* – Jessica Rudolph

Professional Reviews:

- *Booklist Online* – 11/1/15
- *Kirkus reviews* – 02/01/15
- *Voice of Youth Advocates* -04/01/15
- *School Library Journal* – 03/01/15