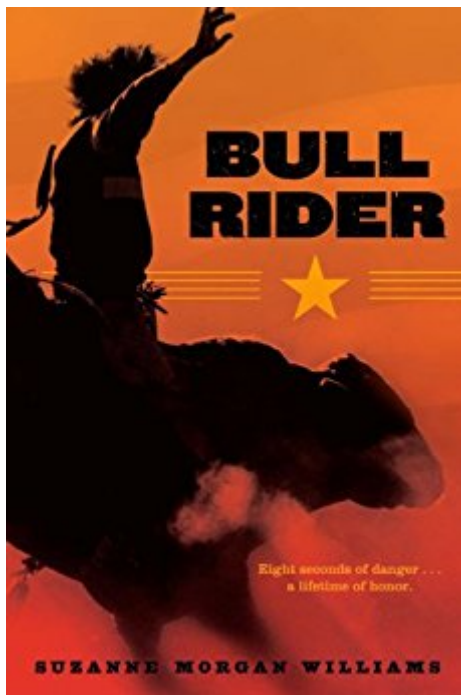


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# Bull Rider



## Synopsis

All it takes is eight seconds . . . Cam O'Mara, grandson and younger brother of bull-riding champions, is not interested in partaking in the family sport. Cam is a skateboarder, and perfecting his tricksâ "frontside flips, 360sâ "means everything until his older brother, Ben, comes home from Iraq, paralyzed from a brain injury. What would make a skateboarder take a different kind of ride? And what would get him on a monstrosity of a bull named Ugly? If Cam can stay on for the requisite eight seconds, could the \$15,000 prize bring hope and a future for his big brother?

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I did wonder, initially, how I was going to connect with this book - not knowing anything about Bull Riding, or caring much about Skate Boarding, and not coming from Nevada, or even the United States. However, I do know 14 year old boys, and however much they try to hide it with grunts and bad haircuts, there are sensitive hearts and undeveloped amygdalas making their lives very confusing and difficult to navigate. Especially when other family stuff is going on - and other stuff is often going on. The author describes this well. The teenage desire to be the centre of the universe,

while being left well alone; the conflict of needing to be different and needing to belong; the distancing from the intensive parenting of earlier years, while still desperately needing to be parented. This is some of what I take from the book. Cam is fourteen, and he loves boarding - or that is what he tells us. I'm not entirely sure that it ever quite rang true for me. It doesn't take a lot to distract him from boarding. To me it was the classic avoidance passion. He was determined not to be a bull rider because he was worried he would never be as good as Ben - his big brother, whom he idolises. Boarding really represented his need to be different and his need to find his own passion. Of course, inevitably bull-riding does become an important part of his life, as he struggles with the results of a devastating family event. Cam feels powerless to help, until he hits on the idea of riding a particularly large and nasty beast, called Ugly, to win 15 000 dollars, but to do this he has to use a little bit of subterfuge. Along the way, Cam faces friendship issues, fallen idol issues, battles with his parents and his own self-confidence. A strong relationship with two of his grandparents helps him to achieve his goals. This is a great book that I think many boys will enjoy. I have put it in the 12+ category mostly because I think the content is more appropriate for slightly older children, but it is not a difficult read at all. I would rate this at about a 3.5 / 5, perhaps getting closer to a 4 than a 3. Definitely worth a read!

This is another book I purchased for my personal classroom library, Ms. Chretien's little library. I am reading several books at the same time, but I have found Bull Rider to be a wonderful addition to my library that tells a truly accurate story of small-town life and what happens when tragedy strikes a family. I also love the juxtaposition of skate boarding and bull riding, couldn't be a better visual metaphor of my own experiences teaching in two small rural communities 100s of miles apart.

Storyline - Cam O'Mara's family has a history of bull riding, but thinks you would have to be crazy to get on one of those animals, preferring to stay on his skate board. But when his older brother, Ben, returns home from Iraq, injured from an IED, Cam would do anything for him. Even if it means getting on the one bull no one has ridden, with fifteen thousand dollars being offered to the first one who can stay on for a full 8 seconds. Personal Opinion - When I saw the cover, I was intrigued. When I heard what it was about, I was excited. When I read it, I was blown away. I read this book within days of starting it, finding it hard to put down and wanting to know what happened next. I used to love to watch bull riding, still do, even though I tend to cheer for the bull and not the rider, which is what initially made me want to read this. But it is so much more than just bull riding. It is about a young man's struggle to handle life after his brother gets hurt and what he is willing to do to

help him. This book was wonderful, my only complaints being I wish the friends had been developed more earlier in the book and some St. Jude medals were used more like a good-luck charm instead of how they really should be used (but any other time God or Christian stuff was brought up, it was very respectful and accurate, so I don't think the author means anything negative with this use). A great book with a wonderful story, action, growth, learning, and characters. Oh, and bull riding.

A terrific book that blends the culture of bull riding, the realities of a family member come home from war, and a very real and caring protagonist (Cam) who wants nothing but to see his family heal. I'm a real stickler when it comes to pacing - I easily put down a book, even if I'm well into it - but this book did a great job, beginning, middle, and end. I learned a lot, too, which I always look for in books. Before I pick up a book, I ask myself, can it expand my base of knowledge? And for Bull Rider: Yes. There was the bull riding, of course, but then also skate boarding, war vet culture, as well as the culture in a part of the country that I've never been to. A wonderful book, thoroughly researched, and written with great heart.

This book was recommended to me by a fellow teacher. I have to admit, as an Afghanistan veteran, that parts of this book were disturbing to me. Of course that is because the author does an excellent job of capturing the hidden wounds we all carry and the unrecognized toll those wounds take on our families. I love the ending and thanks for the hope.

Received it.

Saddle up for an amazing ride when you read BULL RIDER. Suzanne Morgan Williams debuts her first novel about the bonds of brothers and the heartbreak of war with the backdrop of the romping, rowdy arena of bull riding. There's a great mix of fun, adventure, heart and family. Librarians and teachers--this is a book you can offer to reluctant readers or anyone who loves skate boarding, horses and bull riding. The ranch family setting is great, with realistic characters and a memorable supportive extended family including a grandmother who loves playing pranks. There's still more...just wait till you get to the ending. All I could say when I read the last paragraph was "WOW!" Don't miss this WOW! book.

My son enjoyed this book so much, I read it myself. It was such a great read, I purchased a copy for my son's school library.

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