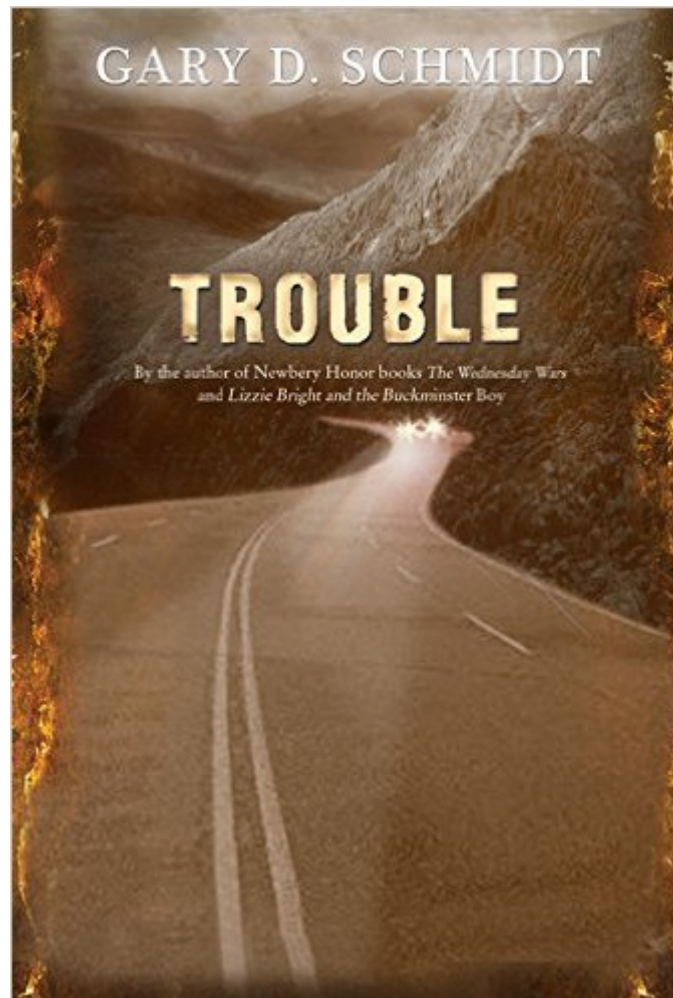


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# Trouble



## Synopsis

Henry Smith's father told him that if you build your house far enough away from Trouble, then Trouble will never find you. But Trouble comes careening down the road one night in the form of a pickup truck that strikes Henry's older brother, Franklin. In the truck is Chay Chouan, a young Cambodian from Franklin's preparatory school, and the accident sparks racial tensions in the school and in the well-established town where Henry's family has lived for generations. Caught between anger and grief, Henry sets out to do the only thing he can think of: climb Mt. Katahdin, the highest mountain in Maine, which he and Franklin were going to climb together. Along with Black Dog, whom Henry has rescued from drowning, and a friend, Henry leaves without his parents' knowledge. The journey, both exhilarating and dangerous, turns into an odyssey of discovery about himself, his older sister, Louisa, his ancestry, and why one can never escape from Trouble.

## Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (51 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #118,377 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #74 in [Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction > Social & Family Issues > Prejudice & Racism](#) #143 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Prejudice & Racism](#) #178 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Death & Dying](#)

Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

I don't think that there's any way for me to summarize the complex plot that makes up the novel TROUBLE, but I'm going to try. Henry's father always said that if you stayed far enough away from Trouble, Trouble would never find you. It was what Henry and everyone else in his family believed. Until Trouble came to their lives in the form of Chay, a young Cambodian teen. Henry's older

brother, Franklin, had been jogging on the night Chay hit him. Chay said it was an accident but their community thinks otherwise -- because Cambodians don't belong there and are the cause of every disaster. Filled with anger of the accident, Henry, his best friend, and Black Dog set out to do the one thing Henry and Franklin had planned to do - climb Mt. Katahdin. They don't know how they're going to get there, how they're going to survive, or anything about climbing mountains, but they know they're going to do it. As their journey continues, Henry runs into the one he hates most. Chay is also running from Trouble, and the once-enemies become allies. Henry begins to realize that family is not always what it seems -- and sometimes you just can't run from Trouble. All I can say is that this is an amazing book and should be required reading in every classroom. Not only were the characters real and three-dimensional, each with their own quirks and problems, but the plot was also drawn out perfectly, with the right amount of details and action. You could feel yourself being taken into their world and, though this is technically a historical novel, I could barely tell because it seemed so real. While reading this book, you will feel your heart breaking for Chay but you'll also be hoping that everything turns out okay for Henry's family.

" 'It smells like you have a dog in here,' he said. 'A wet dog.' His voice was tight. "It did not seem useful to Henry to lie about this. "Especially since the dog came around the corner of the island and sat down, her head cocked off to the side so that the ear with the large missing piece stuck out. "Now Henry's father's face grew tight, too. " 'Get the dog out of here,' he said. " 'I just saved her from drowning in the cove.' " 'That was a mistake. You don't go looking for Trouble, Henry... Get away.' "The last part was directed not at Henry but at the dog, who had come to sniff Henry's father to see if he might be at all interesting. " 'Get away,' he said again. 'Black dog, get away.' "The dog lifted up a paw. "And Henry's father kicked her about as hard as a slippered foot can kick. Enough to skid her across the quarried stone floor. "She did not cry out. When she stopped skidding, she turned on her back, put her feet up in the air, and showed her belly. " 'Why did you ever bring that dog in here?' said Henry's father. 'Look at her. Who would want a black dog like that? Lying there, all beat up. Bleeding. Pieces of her missing.' He stopped. He leaned against the kitchen island and put his hands across his eyes. 'Pieces of her missing,' he said again. His body trembled, slowly, and then a little bit more, and a little more, like a building that is beginning to feel the earthquake starting under its foundations. "Then his mouth opened, and though no sound came out, his silent howls filled the kitchen. "Henry held his father. Tight. Very tight. He felt the black dog come back to them. He felt his father reach down to scratch behind her chipped ear.

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