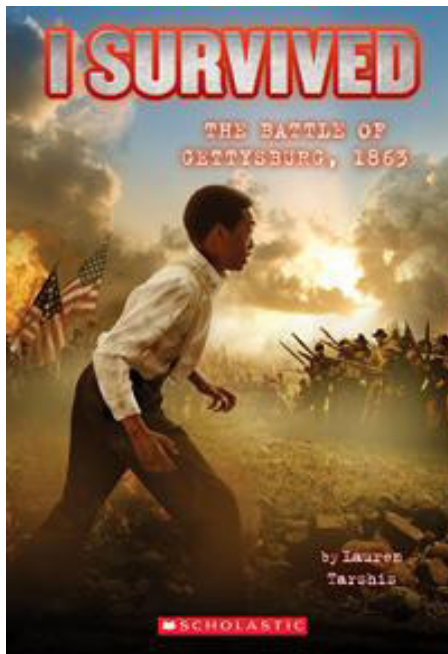

KIRKUS

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I Survived the Battle of Gettysburg, 1863

From the “I Survived” series, volume 7

By Lauren Tarshis, illustrated by Scott Dawson

Age Range: 8-12

KIRKUS REVIEW

The seventh (chronologically earliest) entry in the series pitches a young former slave into the middle of the Civil War’s pivotal battle.

Having saved a Union soldier named Henry Green by hurling a live skunk at his Confederate captors, young Thomas finds himself and his little sister Birdie adopted by Green’s unit. Three weeks, an ambush and a quick march later, Thomas unexpectedly finds himself in the thick of the fighting—possibly on Missionary Ridge itself, though the author doesn’t provide a specific location. Rather than go into details of the battle, Tarshis offers broad overviews of slavery

and the war’s course (adding more about the latter in an afterword that includes the text of the Gettysburg Address). She folds these into quick pictures of military camp life and the violence-laced fog of war. Afterward, Thomas and Birdie are reunited with their older cousin Clem, who had been sold away, and make good on a promise to Green (who doesn’t survive) to settle with his Vermont parents and attend the school taught by his sweetheart.

Sentimental of plotline but informative and breathlessly paced. (Q&A, annotated reading list) *(Historical fiction. 9-11)*

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