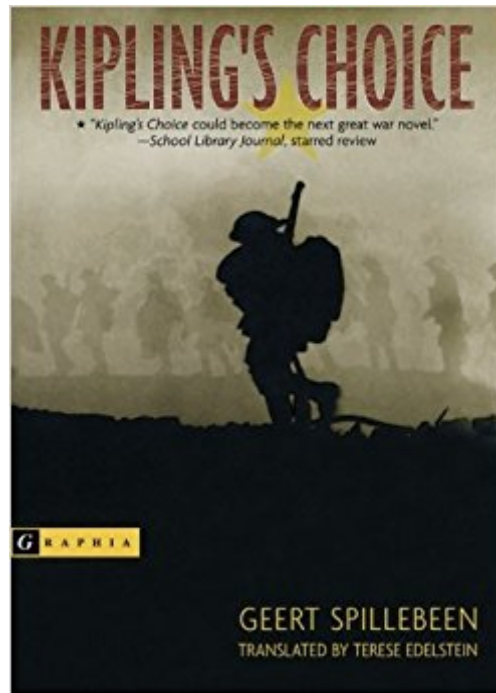




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# Kipling's Choice



## Synopsis

As a young man, Rudyard Kipling was devastated when his military application was rejected because of poor eyesight. Although Rudyard would go on to win England's highest accolades, he never got over this lost opportunity to serve his country. When World War I broke out, John, like his father before him, wanted to fight for his country. When his military application was threatened for the same reason as his father's poor eyesight, Rudyard took matters into his own hands. Determined not to let history repeat itself, the elder Kipling applied all his influence to get his son a commission. The teenager who had lived his life in comfort and whose greatest concern had been pleasing his father now faced a much greater challenge—staying alive in his first battle. Geert Spillebeen's moving fictionalized account follows the true story of John Kipling, a young man whose desire to live up to the family name threatens his very survival. It also draws attention to the senseless suffering and loss of life in this and every war.

## Book Information

Paperback: 160 pages

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Age Range: 12 and up

Grade Level: 7 and up

## Customer Reviews

Gr. 7-10. "It is his very first field battle. And his very last as well." First published in Belgium, this fictionalized biography begins as Lt. John Kipling, age 18, lies dying in France in World War I. The narrative contrasts the gruesome details of his personal injuries and the slaughter around him with his glowing memory of how his beloved father, the world-famous writer, used his influence to get the

authorities to overlook John's poor eyesight so that he could fight in a glorious adventure for the British Empire against "barbaric Huns." Like Michael Morpurgo's *Private Peaceful* (2004), the power of this story is in the contrast between the war and the home front. The translation is clear and direct, and, without heavy messages, the changing viewpoints reveal the patriotic blather and racism that drove the acclaimed writer to send the boy he loved to die in a war he knew nothing about. The family story is heartfelt--the letters, the memories, and the loss. Hazel

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"This well-written novel combines facts with speculation about John Kipling's short life and gruesome death. A riveting account of World War I, Kipling's *Choice* could become the next great war novel." *School Library Journal*, Starred  
"This powerful anti-war novel, made even more powerful by its roots in a famous author's real life and his evolution from war zealot to embittered, broken father, deserves a place beside *All Quiet on the Western Front*." --Kirkus, starred  
Kirkus Reviews, Starred  
"The power of this story is in the contrast between the war and the home front. . . . The changing viewpoints reveal the patriotic blather and racism that drove the acclaimed writer to send the boy he loved to die in a war he knew nothing about." --Booklist  
Booklist, ALA  
"The novel subtly conveys the complexities and ironies of the father/son relationship. Between the lines readers will detect that John desperately needs approval from his father and Rudyard just as desperately wants his son to become what he could never be: a war hero." -- Publishers Weekly  
Publishers Weekly

Good book and a good story.

Geert Spillebeen's *Choice* is a detailed account of a 17 year old John Kipling, fighting for the Irish Guard during World War I. Throughout the book John has a series of flashbacks explaining how he got to this point in his life, most of which he is laying wounded on the battlefield. John's father Rudyard had tried to join the army years before but had been turned down due to his terrible vision. Because of this Rudyard had always wanted his son to be a successful soldier in the army. It began with John's lavish life style at the training camp then swiftly changed into the grim reality of war for John Kipling.

I found this book a fascinating read. I was aware that it was based a nucleus of fact, namely how the

son of Rudyard Kipling died in action on the Western Front, and that there was a fictional "infill". The story seemed very vivid, as if I were there myself, dying in No Mans Land. It was quick and easy to read, and left me with a strong feeling of the futility of war. Jim Stacey, Dungarvan, Co. Waterford, Ireland

I choose this book by chance. Please note that subconsciously I entered (killings choice) a very sad and disturbing book. How many fathers have lost a son by promoting a war?

I thought this book was different than any other book that I have ever read. It kept going from the present time of what was going through Rudyard Kipling's head as he lay on the ground wounded back to what he was thinking about from his past. This book made me feel really bad for young Rudyard Kipling, because throughout most of the book he was helpless due to his near fatal injuries. He literally lay paralyzed on the ground completely helpless. The worst part about that was people were stealing things from him when he couldn't do anything about. Even the Germans were taking things from him. It would have been better if they just shot him to put him out of his misery if they weren't going to help him. But overall I thought the book wasn't the best ever written, but was very enjoyable to read. I would recommend this book to anyone who likes a good war story.

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