



A Chair for My Mother

Vera B. Williams

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After their home is destroyed by a fire, Rosa, her mother and grandmother save their coins to buy a really comfortable chair for all to enjoy.

A Chair for My Mother Details

Date : Published January 23rd 2007 by Greenwillow Books (first published 1982)

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Author : Vera B. Williams

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Genre : Childrens, Picture Books, Realistic Fiction, Family

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From Reader Review A Chair for My Mother for online ebook

Katie Carson says

Author Vera B. Williams does a wonderful job telling the tale of a young girl and her mother and their dedication to restoring their lives back to normal following a fire that burned all their possessions in their home. The idea of having your home and catch on fire and losing all your possessions is a fear that many of us have. It's a terrible circumstance that everyone can consider how they would handle and begin to rebuild their life after. This common fear and questioning make this book a perfect example of contemporary realistic fiction. "A Chair for My Mother" teaches readers lessons in hard work, empathy and appreciation throughout the story. The pages of this book are filled with bright, beautifully crafted illustrations, outlined by frames that connect one page to the next.

This was one of my favorite books growing up and was thrilled to reconnect with it again!

Cortnee Hill says

Genre: Realistic Fiction

Reading Level: Early Reader; Ages 3-8; 1st-3rd Grade

This book is filled with images of family and love, accompanied by pages of vivid color and detailed illustrations that truly captivate the eyes of young readers. In short, this book is about a mother, daughter, and grandmother who experience the loss of items due to a fire and how they work together as a family and community to pull the pieces of their lives back together. While this is a simple tale of love between family and community it has some very important themes for young children to understand and grasp. These include but are not limited to: Responsibility, Family, Community, Change, Money, Culture. Particularly, what I loved most about the book is how Vera B. Williams displayed the interconnectedness of different cultures working together to achieve a common goal, which reminds me of the old saying, "It takes a village..."

I believe this book can be most appropriately used in the classroom when talking about a unit on community and working together. I also believe this is a wonderful book that I would read to my students at the beginning of the school year, as some of the themes such as Responsibility, Culture, and Community are important when working together throughout the school year. I highly recommend this book to be apart of any teachers classroom library. Although this book is short and sweet and relatively easy for children to grasp it's themes and content can provide rich, creative learning experiences and conversations for students that can stretch beyond the classroom. I hope that you can enjoy this book as much as I did. I'm sure your students would appreciate it and enjoy it even more.

Kelly says

This is another one of my favorites. For years I dreamed of saving a great big jar of coins. Only now am I actually doing it (with the Staffer of course). Anyway, there's a little girl, and there's a fire, and she lives with her mom and grandma, and her mom is so tired after work and has to sit in a kitchen chair to rest, so they save up all their coins and...

Jinya Situ says

I like this book because we can teach young children how to care about their mother. This book is telling about Rosa ,her mother and grandmother save money for buying a comfortable chair after their house burned in a fire. I think children will say things like this my mommy will lay on our comfortable chair after she finished her job.i would ask children question like this do you love your mother,how you make your mother feel happy.

Fjóla says

Maybe this is a necessary read, but it is not a very enjoyable one. I would actually save it until ready to tackle a plethora of social issues with your child. I would have thought the story was more dated, but no, it's only from 1982 (although you could say 30 years is a long, long time) and I suppose we should presume the issues presented in the story are still to date. It is a bit hard to picture though, in this age of everybody buying all their heart's desires in a whim - on credit(!) The story is very realistic and forces the child to think in terms of other people's needs and desires, so it's a good lesson in altruism. But in many ways it's a bit too realistic for my taste, and I would prefer to spare my son having to worry about lacking money for basics, his parents being too tired from work to interact or play with him, or having his house burn down, until he's a little bigger, say 7-8 years old. Actually, I would rather not he have concerns about money at all, until he's quite a bit older (and I say this as someone growing up as the oldest sibling in a single parent household)!

Sadly though, this is probably a story kids should be reading, should it be sooner rather than later, and whether it's because this is their reality or because they're so completely detached from it ...

I hesitated between rating the book 2 or 3 stars, as I didn't take any pleasure from it and I didn't really care all that much for the illustrations.

Dolly says

This is a fantastic story. It's a heartwarming story with a lot of depth for a children's book.

It teaches about saving without being too preachy and it also is a great example about giving generously to those who need it. Our girls enjoyed this story and I loved it.

This book was selected as one of the books for the May 2016- Caldecott Honors discussion at the Picture-Book Club in the Children's Books Group here at Goodreads.

This book was also selected as one of the books for the May 2018 - Boston Globe-Horn Book Picture Book Award Winners 1983-1990 discussion at the Picture-Book Club in the Children's Books Group here at Goodreads.

Lauren Johnson says

Vera B. Williams' *A Chair for My Mother* is a beautiful story of the three strong women. The story of hardship and struggle is told by a young girl. The young girl describes to the readers how her mother, grandmother, and herself have been saving money to purchase a chair. We learn that the family lost everything they had in an apartment fire. The family is able to save and finally have "A Chair for My Mother" at the end of the story. This realistic fiction text is so much more than a story of a family restarting after a fire. Elementary students of all ages can enjoy and learn from the many social justice themes such as hard work, community compassion, family strength, saving, perseverance, and overcoming hardship. I used this book in my own classroom to spark discussion about community involvement and responsibility. As we read the story I found my students being drawn in more and more as they saw the members of the neighborhood come together to give to this family after the fire. This is WOW book for me due to the response my Kindergarteners had. I was shocked at the engagement and response to the story. At the conclusion of the story my classroom was filled with hands raised and excited eyes. Students wanted to share how they had either helped a family in the past or brainstormed ways they would like to help others in their community. We also used this book when discussing about what being thankful means to them. Many students referred back to this text. Some students explained how they were thankful for their homes like the family was for their new apartment. Others shared how they were thankful to live in a town or area where other people cared about them and were always willing to help. I look forward to using this book in the future with my students as a way to introduce a service project and show the big impact they can make on someone else's life by giving to others.

Kristen says

A Chair for My Mother

Reading Level: Easy Reader, Ages 4-8

Genre: Fiction, Realistic Fiction

Illustrator:

This is a sweet story intended for elementary age students. The story touches on themes such as family life, saving, hard work, and hardship to an extent. The story is told from the perspective of a little girl who lives with her mother. The mom appears to be a single mother with close extended family that lives close by, with the grandmother being one of the three main characters. The story begins with the daughter telling how she and her mother are saving money for a new chair. Throughout the story, you learn the reason why they are saving money for a new chair. Their house had burned down and they lost all of their belongings in the fire. In finding their way to a new apartment, the generosity by neighbors and the family is brought forth displaying a strong sense of community, and family. Finally they have enough money to buy their big comfy chair for their new apartment. They are tired from working so hard and thoroughly enjoy the rest, and comfort symbolized by the new chair. I liked how the story includes three generations of women, their close bond, and hard work.

Manybooks says

Vera B. William's *A Chair for my Mother* is simply, utterly beautiful, both ascetically and morally,

philosophically. Engagingly, with an ever-present but still delightfully understated emotionality, and thus, without too much exaggeration and pathos, it features both struggle/pain and joy. Rosa's family is poor (and I think that Rosa's mother might also be also a single parent), and has suffered a terrible loss due to a destructive fire that has basically left them without material possessions (including a comfortable chair for Rosa's mother to relax on when she comes home tired from her low wage paying waitressing job at a local diner), but thankfully, both the grandmother and the pet cat escaped the fire with no injuries (although it did take a while to locate the cat).

The fire, the loss Rosa's family has experienced notwithstanding, the text, the narrative of A Chair for My Mother, while definitely showing the destruction the conflagration has caused and presenting Rosa's family as being among the so-called working poor, is primarily optimistic and features mostly positives, such as family togetherness, community, how after the fire, Rosa's family and neighbours (many of whom are likely as economically strapped as Rosa's mother) rally to provide moral, emotional support and necessary furniture (Rosa, her mother and grandmother move in with family until they are able to relocate to a downstairs apartment, with neighbours and family donating beds, tables, chairs and curtains, along with necessary kitchen utensils). And although it does take some time for the family to save enough coins, to save enough money to be able to purchase a large, comfortable chair (primarily for Rosa's hardworking mother, but also for the grandmother to sit back and relax while preparing food), one day, the jar is full, and a comfortable chair beckons as a reality, and no longer just a dream (showing not only a sweet and happy ending, but also demonstrating that patience, perseverance, that saving ones coins, can and does make a difference).

The accompanying illustrations are bright, lively and expressive (both emotion and movement, the destructive power of the fire, as well as community spirit that sustains and nourishes Rosa's family in their hours of need are evocatively depicted). And although by themselves, I would probably not consider them personal favourites, I do love the colour schemes used, and consider the illustrations a more than fitting compliment and complement to the narrative, the storyline recounted in and with A Chair for my Mother.

Toree Howe says

- This story is about a tragedy and how the family is coping with the aftermath. It is about saving for something special and the importance of friends and family.
- Many children don't have everything they need. I like how this story gives an example of one little girl but focuses on the important things in her life.
- This can be used with children to start a discussion of the important things in their lives and how it is important to do things for others.

Read aloud for 1st through 3rd. Used to lead to a deeper discussion with both younger and older students.

Esther Soberanis says

Text-to Teaching Connection

A Chair For Your Mother by Vera Williams is a great book to teach 3rd-grade Cause and Effect and to discuss need versus wants. It can also utilize as a guided reading book or a read aloud. You can also integrate Math lessons, where students each get a jar with some coins. Students will then sort the coins by value.

Students will then given a worksheet to show how many ways can you make \$1.00 from the coins they have. Then students will be asked to total up all the coins in the jar.

Jessica says

This is such a beautiful story! This has so many different topics like family, hardships, hardwork, love and generosity.

This family faced a tragedy as they lost their belongings in a fire. Rosa, her mother and grandmother save a their loose change to purchase a comfy chair they can all use. They are so dedicated in restoring their lives after such a tragic event.

Hayley DeRoche says

There are so many things to love about this classic: the portrayal of a house fire and its aftermath and the way neighbors ought to help each other; a family that experiences routine financial tightness; a multigenerational family living together...the list goes on. The story being told from the point-of-view of a child is still compelling and rich, and the payoff at the end is sweet and satisfying. It's a classic for a reason.

Sheila says

My daughter received this book for Christmas and we read it aloud together. A lovely story about hardship, tragedy, yet about love, hard work, savings, with an eventual happy ending. We both enjoyed this one.

Malbadeen says

A book about a chair!

It's about a chair!

A house has burnt down and people have jobs and etc, etc, but the book is about a chair and the people that sit in it.

I LOVE this book!

I also love this book because it flies in the face of the ever present argument that we force the "beginning, middle, end" and "first, next, then, finally" format on students.

"HA! SEE, SEE what i mean"?!?! I want to say when i read this book. I want to say it to everyone everywhere. See, even in kids books. It's there, the structure of the story is propelled by the STORY not by the formula. Throw your stupid graphic organizers away and quite talking to me about your GD "transitional words"

This book starts in the present, moves to the past and ends in a present that has moved forward without being explicitly narrated.

I LOVE this book.

I really, really, really love this book.

