



After the Rain

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At fifteen, Rachel is a worrier. She worries about whether her family understands her, whether her friends like her, and whether she'll get her first kiss before she turns sixteen. And she worries about whether she can handle having a real boyfriend if he does come along.

But it takes a dying old man -- her grandfather -- who has never been easy for anyone to handle, to show Rachel she has very special abilities. With love and compassion, she reaches the heart of an old tyrant who has always been unreachable. And in so doing, she comes to a better understanding of her family, her friends, and herself.

After the Rain Details

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From Reader Review After the Rain for online ebook

Diane says

One of my favorite things about this book is how believable it is. I don't mean that in the sense that it's realistic fiction rather than fantasy, either- I mean the characters. Despite the fact that they are all distinct and very diverse, there isn't a single person I would describe as unrealistic, nor do any of the relationships feel strained or fake in the slightest. Rachel, in particular, is a perfectly average teenage girl

After the Rain has very little flair, but it doesn't need any. This is the very embodiment of the phrase "simplicity is the finest form of sophistication"; it gets its message across without bells or whistles, and though it may not shatter your worldview, the changes it does bring about are going to stick.

That message? Time can never be too precious, and you just might find yourself loving someone if you give them a chance.

A beautiful book with lovely writing.

Josiah says

"I guess, really thinking about it, I always assumed when you missed someone, it was tangible...something real you could grab and hold on to, but it's a not-there feeling."

—Rachel, *After the Rain*, P. 243

This book doesn't have a lot of flair to it. It certainly jumps out at the reader much less than most young adult books that I have read, but you'll find the real power of *After the Rain* in the utterly compelling, totally realistic feel that it brings to all of the relationships enclosed within.

Rachel is a regular girl in many ways, but she also has her own way of viewing the world, and her own take on family and relationships and the way that things should work, giving her basic idiosyncrasies like everyone has.

If *After the Rain* had focused almost entirely on only the relationships between Rachel and her grandpa and Rachel and her unexpected new companion Lewis Olswanger, it would have been a noble triumph, a book of rare depth and insight to be treasured for its glowing strength and remembered always. Norma Fox Mazer takes the concept of relationships much further than that, however. We see Rachel experiencing dynamic, living, breathing relationships with almost everyone who enters into the narrative's course, setting forth while slowly realizing what each of these personal connections mean to her as she grows into a wise, thoughtful teenager.

The scenes between Rachel and Lewis are bulging at the seams with some kind of understated magic, special and sweet and perceptive, warming the heart and bringing light to the mind's eye. The scenes with Rachel and her grandpa bring about the same effect but in a wholly different way, allowing us to experience the full spectrum of the quality of relationships for ourselves. It is a rare and wonderful book that accomplishes these subtle objectives with such true graceful goodness.

After the Rain will stay behind in one's thoughts long after finishing the book. You will remember the

characters and think on them, wanting to know them personally, to see what it would mean to *you* to interact with Lewis and Rachel and Helena and Jeremy and more. In my mind, this fine novel is a true and rich success, and I liked it very much. I would give three and a half stars to *After the Rain*.

Luann says

This is a quiet, sweet story about a teenage girl and her relationships with her parents, her best friend, and her grandfather. I didn't care about some of the characters until quite far into the story, but by the end I really cared about them all. It wasn't as much about her relationship with a new boyfriend as I thought it would be based on the cover picture. But I should know by now that you can't depend on cover pictures to let you know what the story is about!

This was a Newbery Honor winner in 1988.

Martip says

I liked this story just fine. There are many reviews. I direct you to those. I can see why this won an honor.

Karen says

This 1988 Newbery Honor book is the story of teenaged Rachel who has all of the problems of a 15 year old girl and then some. Rachel was written very well, typically insecure about just about everything and as rebellious as she dared to be. The main thrust of the story is the relationship, or lack thereof, between herself and her crusty old grandfather. When he develops terminal Mesothelioma Rachel becomes his unwilling caregiver. As time goes on, predictably, grandpa becomes less crusty and Rachel develops a strong emotional relationship with him. Mazer examines all of Rachel's feelings; her emerging love for her grandfather, her curiosity, her anger, her grief, her confusion, everything she feels before, during, and after her grandfather's death. It would have been a very touching story had Mazer stayed focused on just that aspect of Rachel's life.

Unfortunately too many other characters were drawn into the story and as a result there were too many loose threads and unfinished story lines when all was said and done. It was just, and more to the point, unnecessarily, all over the place.

After the Rain is probably too dated for today's young readers but it is a good story with a valuable moral lesson - it's never too late to develop familial relationships and how much those relationships can teach you about yourself and those close to you. The rest of the characters might have made a good sequel.

Liz says

An intense story about dealing with a loved one dying, written from the perspective of a teenage girl, who is also going through her own transition into adulthood. Somewhat melancholy, of course, but probably a good conversation starter when broaching the forbidden topic of how to handle death.

Megan says

When I was a kid, Saturday, the Twelfth of October by Norma Fox Mazer was one of my favorite books. I can't tell you about the first time I read it or the effect it had on me. But I can say that I read it many, many times. When I rediscovered it as an adult, it still managed to entertain the heck out of me. Mazer didn't write any other fantasy novels, but I've been (slowly!) working my way through her YA books anyway hoping to find something as good as Saturday. So far, I've been disappointed, but I finally struck gold with **After the Rain**.

Reading this book initially took a lot of patience. So many times I wanted to put it down due to boredom. It just moved slowly and seemed old fashioned. Granted when I checked the publication date, it was 1987. And although that doesn't seem so long ago to me (ahem!) it is 23, now almost 24 years ago.... Anyhow, it struck me how much YA literature has changed. **After the Rain** doesn't involve a palpitation inducing drama, conflict, love interest or mystery. There is little action and the dialogue is not witty or fast paced. But I am so very glad I stuck with it. Mazer tells a story about family, death, sickness, friendship and first love. Her talent is that she has the ability to tackle some very heavy subjects without making it sound like *a very special episode* of a bad 1980's sitcom. It's so hard to praise a good coming of age novel without sounding cliché, so I'm going to quit trying. I definitely recommend this for YA readers of any age.

A final note ~ as we learn in the synopsis, grandpa is diagnosed with a terminal illness. I have to say that I was *appalled* by the way his doctor treated him. When the doctor decided on a diagnosis, he told the family but insisted grandpa be kept in the dark, which is pretty fucked up. Grandpa is an independent, alert and oriented person; he deserves to know he is dying. Then, when grandpa's disease is progressing the family calls the doctor who shrugs his shoulders and says there is nothing to be done. Uh, hospice consult, anyone? Portable oxygen, PRN ativan, roxanol, breathing treatments, nutritional supplements and home health visits. Uh... anyway... the thing is, as a nurse who works with elderly, terminally sick and dying patients I kept reading about grandpa's disease and automatically thinking of what needed to be done to make him more comfortable but none of these steps were taken. Were things really so different in 1987? The worst was when grandpa got really bad and was admitted to the hospital. The doctor jovially said, "We'll run some tests and have you out of here in a few days." Then turned to the family (when grandpa was out of earshot) and said he won't be leaving the hospital...*ever*. What the hell? Grandpa is literally on his deathbed, and that fuckwad of a doctor still doesn't have the balls to be straight with him. Poor grandpa.

Becky Kondritz says

Did not really care for this one--not entirely sure why it was a Newbery Honor.

Cheryl says

Beautiful, intelligent, moving. But young me would have been bored to tears. More later when we get around to reading it in the Newbery club in the Children's Books group. (Oops.)

Sarah Augustinsky says

This book made me extremely happy. It was a normal relateable plotline, with normal, relateable characters, in a normal relateable town. Usually, this would infuriate me to no end, but curiously, I enjoyed it a lot. The characters were perfectly relateable. The relationships and the ending of the story were very nice and easy, not to sugary sweet like some stories like this tend to be.

Good book overall.

Natsuki Nakazawa says

I like this book because I really understand how the main character Rachel feels about the relationship between friends and family. She is 15 years old, and she does not have self-confidence. She worried about her appearance and difference from other girls. She eventually fell in love with Lewis. However, she begins to concern more about her grandfather because she found that he has ill. After I finished reading this book, I learned that family is really important to my life. This book is very enjoyable because all the setting is believable, not fantasy. I think many girls can feel sympathy with Rachel's feeling. Therefore I recommend this book to especially teenage girls.

Louie says

This, this book was amazing and sad. It is now one of my favorite books ever. The way that Ms Mazer captured the real, True emotions of a teenager was indescribable in a good way. If you like this I suggest reading A Begonia for Miss Applebaum by Paul Zindel. Just remember to bring the tissues.

Lizzi says

I had to read this book for school and it didn't wow me. I found the main character to be a bit annoying and truthfully rather insufferable at times. If it wasn't for school I would have never picked it up.

Thomas Bell says

There are quite a few Newbery honor books (and a couple winners) that I really didn't like, but I could make some guesses as to why they were chosen.

This book is the exception. I don't know why it was chosen. Let me explain why it shouldn't have been.

First, it is fairly modern, i.e. written since I was born, so it doesn't have that as an excuse for not great grammar and horrible placement of commas.

Second, the book uses some fowl language that I have only seen in rare occasion, and at those times only a few times per book, in other Newbery winners or honors.

Third, none of the characters are likable, though it is clear that the author wants them to be:

- The main character is a loser teen. The author calls her 'a worrier,' but she's more of a selfish snob. The author calls her smart, but she appears stupid to me.
- The boyfriend is immature. The author calls him smart and funny. Also quite a stupid and conceited character.
- The grandpa, (who is the other main character, not the boyfriend like you'd think from the cover - which is clearly a way to try to get teenage girls to buy the book), is mean and cold. Yes, the author did this on purpose, but she tried to shine light into him to make him seem like a good guy underneath. I think the author's idea of what good people are is a little messed up. Maybe she hasn't really known any good people.
- The uncle is a loser. The author makes his running around from job to job, girl to girl, late into his thirties, seem like he's just an adventurer. Then she gives him a hippie beard and attitude to improve his character. Seems like a loser to me.
- The best friend is a prissy fool. She's had a boyfriend every year since she was like 9 years old or something, and her whole goal throughout the story is to try to improve the main character's life by getting her a boyfriend because that's all life is to her. Lame-o.
- The lady that lives on a hill is underdeveloped. The author seems to think having her in the story is this big deep thing. Nope, sorry.

Fourth, the last chapter of the book is a short little one-pager. Usually means kind of a roll-over into life after the story. But the chapter before that did okay; this chapter didn't seem to belong (note the semi-colon instead of the comma the author would have used). The book wasn't great, but it would have been less bad if it was one page shorter.

Anyway, I guess the main idea of the story is okay. Her grandfather is dying, so she starts getting to know him better. Maybe that's why this book won an honor. Moral of the story: get to know grandpa before he kicks the bucket.

P.S. I did feel a little embarrassed reading this book on the bus. That front cover really looks like it's meant to shun anyone who is NOT a preteen girl. I tried to hide the cover while I read it. But if you look real closely, blending in to the shadow of the bridge is the grandfather - the next main character. :-)

Richard says

A superb book about a teenage girl who gets to know her abrasive, dying grandfather with poignant insight into the complexity and contradicting aspects of dying and death. This was a great book.
