



The Quilt

By Gary Paulsen

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The Quilt By Gary Paulsen

1944. Wartime.

A six-year-old boy goes to spend the summer with his grandmother Alida in a small town near the Canadian border. With the men all gone off to fight, the women are left to run the farms. There's plenty for the boy to do—trying to help with the chores, getting to know the dog, and the horses, cows, pigs, and chickens.

But when his cousin Kristina goes into labor, he can't do a thing. Instead, the house fills with women come to help and to wait, and to work on a quilt together. This is no common, everyday quilt, but one that contains all the stories of the boy's family. The quilt tells the truth, past and future: of happiness, courage, and pain; of the greatest joy, and the greatest loss. And as they wait, the women share these memorable stories with the boy.

From the Hardcover edition.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

A companion to *Alida's Song* and *The Cookcamp*, Gary Paulsen's *The Quilt* spends another summer with "the boy" and his grandmother, Alida. World War II is being fought in Europe, and the boy's mother, working in a munitions factory in Chicago, sends her six-year-old son to stay with his grandmother in Minnesota. When Alida's neighbor Kristina goes into labor, Alida packs up the boy and goes to Kristina's farm to help. Mystified, the boy watches as other women arrive, water is boiled, and a quilt is brought out. Now it's time to listen, as the quilt--through the women--tells its stories about family, love, loss, and strength.

As in Paulsen's many other semi-autobiographical stories for young readers (the *Brian* books, *Guts*, etc.), the author's voice is never far beneath the surface. His bitterness towards his own mother, for example (as revealed in the foreword), comes across in lines like this: "Soon, though, other people--men--came to visit her and she started to do very grown-up things. He did not fit in, and when life with his mother became too difficult, he went to live with his grandmother." Although this presence may be irritating to some readers, the details of a remembered time on a farm with wonderfully strong women should appeal to all. (Ages 8 to 12)

--*Emilie Coulter*

From School Library Journal

Grade 6 Up-In this semi-autobiographical novella, Paulsen again writes lovingly about the grandmother who provided such warmth and comfort in his difficult young life during and after World War II. The protagonist, first met in *The Cookcamp* (Orchard, 1991) and later in *Alida's Song* (Delacorte, 1999) is still "the boy," an impersonal term that keeps readers at a distance. It is hard to feel empathy with an anonymous child who is described with adult sensibilities, even though some of the scenes are powerfully written. Especially evocative is the description of the boy and his grandmother's stay with a pregnant cousin who delivers a son and then learns that her husband has been killed in action. However, when the six-year-old questions his grandmother about the men his mother brings back to their apartment and whether they have anything to do with the war, the observation seems forced. Also, the pacing is slow and deliberate. The quilt of the title is how he learns about his heritage and his extended family. However, it is mentioned at the end of the first chapter and not addressed again until nearly 50 pages later. This story works best as an adult reflection and does not have much appeal or relevancy to younger readers.

Edith Ching, St. Albans School, Mt. St. Alban, Washington, DC

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From Booklist

Gr. 3-6. Paulsen is probably best known for his fierce, male action-adventures about survival and war, from *Hatchet* (1987) to *Soldier's Heart* (1998). Consequently, the "gentle happiness" that marks this World War II novel, about a six-year-old boy living with his grandmother, Alida, in a Norwegian immigrant community in Minnesota, may be a surprise. In fact, Paulsen even works in a feminist message about strong women who stay home and take care of things while the men go off to fight and have adventures. Like *The Cookcamp* (1991) and *Alida's Song* (1999), this draws on Paulsen's memories of the perfect grandmother who gave him a home. As Alida and other women gather to help a farmer's wife give birth, they hold a quilting bee and tell stories of their family and neighbors who have died, each one remembered in a patch of cloth. The simple, poignant prose speaks gently about the elemental domestic dramas of birth and death. *Hazel Rochman*

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Lucille Wood:

The book The Quilt can give more knowledge and also the precise product information about everything you want. Why must we leave the good thing like a book The Quilt? A number of you have a different opinion about publication. But one aim that book can give many information for us. It is absolutely appropriate. Right now, try to closer together with your book. Knowledge or information that you take for that, you could give for each other; you can share all of these. Book The Quilt has simple shape however, you know: it has great and massive function for you. You can search the enormous world by available and read a reserve. So it is very wonderful.

Robert Marques:

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Mary Brunner:

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Janice Leon:

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