



The Rabbit Listened

Cori Doerrfeld

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A universal, deeply moving exploration of grief and empathy

With its spare, poignant text and irresistibly sweet illustrations, *The Rabbit Listened* is a tender meditation on loss.

When something terrible happens, Taylor doesn't know where to turn. All the animals are sure they have the answer. The chicken wants to talk it out, but Taylor doesn't feel like chatting. The bear thinks Taylor should get angry, but that's not quite right either. One by one, the animals try to tell Taylor how to process this loss, and one by one they fail. Then the rabbit arrives. All the rabbit does is listen, which is just what Taylor needs.

Whether read in the wake of tragedy or as a primer for comforting others, this is a deeply moving and unforgettable story sure to soothe heartache of all sizes.

The Rabbit Listened Details

Date : Published February 20th 2018 by Dial Books

ISBN : 9780735229358

Author : Cori Doerrfeld

Format : Hardcover 32 pages

Genre : Childrens, Picture Books, Animals

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From Reader Review The Rabbit Listened for online ebook

David Schaafsma says

Each year my family reads all the Goodreads-award-nominated picture books, and we have been doing this for years. Everyone rates each book and adds a comment and it may (or may not) affect my overall rating. This is book #6 of 2018. This is rare this year in that we all agree on the rating! Whoa!

Lyra (11): 4 stars. You don't have to say anything to mean a lot. Just listen.

Hank (12): 4 stars! . . . [Hank here is not saying anything and just listening to the book.]

Harry (13): 4 stars. It shows that sometimes what a person needs most is for someone just to listen.

Penn (family friend): 4.5 stars. I love the concept: There are many options available to you when things fall apart in our lives and we get to choose what is best and most authentic for us even though others may offer solutions/responses that are useful for them. Listening in this book seems actually like a secondary idea.

Tara: 4 stars. Don't push kids to feel a certain way, or to "just get over it," but let them work it out on their own. A good message.

Dave: 4 stars. Asserts the importance of listening to kids (which reminds me of a seventies book, Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus, which gives the same advice to a man to try not solve a problem that a woman shares with him. Shut up and just listen sometimes, man! {i'm trying to learn this. . .} ...more
flag 31 likes · Like · see review

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Jan 19, 2019 MissBecka rated it really liked it

Shelves: 2019-books-i-read, completed-library-rentals, storytime-reads

This was so darn cute!

The illustrations are wonderful and there is just enough text on each page to explain (without over explaining) the story.

There are lots of adorable animals and funny little faces made that gave me smiles and giggles.

Exactly the perfect length for most tiny human's bedtime story.

Not as dark or heavy as I expected and a wonderful way to help explain how all feelings are valid.

flag 30 likes · Like · see review

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Jun 19, 2018 Calista rated it really liked it

Shelves: 2018, bage-children, genre-fantasy, groundbreaking, wordsmith

"Sometimes hugs say more than words" adorn the back cover of the book. This book is about grief.

Several animals tried to help the child and the child didn't need that at the time. As the title says, the rabbit listened, which is what the child needed most. The rabbit was willing to stay in that place of grief with the child.

I loved this book and it is powerful with a great message. It really is. It is talking about how to deal with emotions that are painful.

The nephew liked all the animals tha

...more

flag 27 likes · Like · see review

Feb 21, 2018 Rebecca rated it it was amazing

Shelves: picture-books, gift-books, abstract-idea, simple-is-best

A simply perfect story of loss, grief, and empathy. Children can understand the falling of a block castle as a literal event, or a metaphorical one. The reactions of the various animals are a perfect jumping-off point for discussing how to react (or not react!) to those going through a loss. Have tissues handy. Bonus: main character Taylor's gender is not specified, either with pronouns in the text or coding in the illustrations. This adds to the book's universality.

flag 15 likes · Like · see review

View 2 comments

Feb 23, 2018 Mrs. Krajewski rated it it was amazing

A review from my 6-year-old daughter: "I liked it! No one tells you how to feel. They don't know how you feel inside unless you listen to them. My favorite character was the rabbit and Taylor because the rabbit listened to Taylor so much! I love Taylor because Taylor made such cool castles!"

flag 12 likes · Like · see review

Oct 09, 2018 Deb (Readerbuzz) Nance rated it it was amazing

Shelves: children, healing, relationships, cybils

A child builds an amazing structure out of blocks only to have it destroyed by a group of birds. Many different animals come to offer comfort and they all give suggestions as to how to fix things. But it is only the rabbit who provides true comfort by listening to the child's story and sitting quietly with the child as the child comes up with a solution.

An ideal story for counselors or teachers to share with students or for parents to read with their children at home.

flag 11 likes · Like · see review

View 2 comments

Nov 09, 2018 Julie rated it it was amazing

Shelves: children-s

I found this book profoundly moving. The action of coming alongside and being still and quiet, offering reassurance by being present is beautifully illustrated.

flag 9 likes · Like · see review

Nov 04, 2017 Danielle added it

Shelves: picture-books

An original take on coping with something bad happening—a nice blend of realism and not. Inspires readers to be like the rabbit, and to listen.

flag 9 likes · Like · see review

Jan 15, 2019 La Coccinelle rated it it was amazing · review of another edition

Shelves: children

This is a deceptively simple book about allowing people to deal with loss in their own way. As the story shows, it's not up to the other animals to try to fix Taylor's problem. All the kid really needs is someone to listen to them, and they eventually deal with the loss on their own terms.

The "terrible" thing might not seem so terrible to adult readers, but it could be devastating for a child. As

each of the animals tries to help Taylor, they're turned away. Taylor doesn't want to talk or get an

...more

flag 7 likes · Like · see review

Jan 30, 2019 Christie Angleton rated it it was amazing

Love that there are no pronouns that refer to the child in this book - so inclusive!

flag 7 likes · Like · see review

Apr 17, 2018 Allie rated it really liked it

Shelves: picture-books, picture-books-emotions, picture-books-lap-reads, picture-books-storytime, animals-bunnies, animals, fiction

An excellent addition to the ever-growing shelf of picture books dealing with emotional literacy. This book is about Taylor who makes a tower that gets knocked down, and the parade of animals that try and help.

There are so many ways that people try to help and so many ways we deal with difficulty, and it is imperative that we give children the tools to deal with their emotions in a variety of ways. I think this book would be an excellent opportunity to talk with a child about the emotions of ev

...more

flag 7 likes · Like · see review

Apr 19, 2018 Pamela rated it really liked it

Shelves: childrens, picture-books

Oh the joys of attempting to quell a toddler's meltdown; hence, nigh as improbable as finding a needle in a haystack or a working payphone. It seems the harder one tries to soothe a little tike like Taylor - after their proudly built block tower comes crashing down - the more sullied and obstinate they become.

But . . . The Rabbit Listened.

And the Rabbit knew, patience is more than just a vuirtnue. It's a quiet friend that waits until you're ready to begin again.

Delightful artwork. Imaginative. S

...more

flag 5 likes · Like · see review

Mar 11, 2018 Michele Knott rated it it was amazing

Shelves: death, picture-books, read-in-2018, sel

Powerful book. I love how this one shows many different ways we can react to something and how sometimes we need to go through all of the emotions.

flag 5 likes · Like · see review

Dec 23, 2018 Pooja rated it liked it

Shelves: children

Teaches the readers to be sensitive towards others. Passing judgements and comments is easy when you don't know what the person in front of you is going through. The world would be a better place if we just listen to each other more.

flag 4 likes · Like · see review

Dec 23, 2018 Gary Anderson rated it it was amazing

This is a wonderful, practical guide to empathy for when we want to support someone who is upset.

flag 4 likes · Like · see review

Dec 11, 2018 AleJandra rated it it was amazing

Shelves: kasey-s-books

5 STARS

Explicarle a un niño como funcionan los sentimientos, es un tema prácticamente imposible, no importa cuanta paciencia tengas, y que tan listo sea el niño. A nosotros como adultos, en ocasiones nos cuesta identificar nuestros sentimientos cuando estamos demasiado saturados.

Ahora intentar que un niño lo entienda es o sepa explicarlo es muy complicado.

Y es aquí donde entra este hermoso libro, con una historia tan sencilla. Un niño que se esfuerza en crear un castillo con sus bloques y luego

...more

flag 5 likes · Like · see review

Feb 13, 2018 Jillian Heise rated it it was amazing

Shelves: 1-to-add-to-the-collection, wsra-picbk-2018, yr-2018-shortlist-picbook, pic-book-ct-compassion, pic-books-community-building, pic-books-friendship, pic-books-perspective, pic-books-theme, picture-books-on-my-shelf

Tears. A new favorite picture book. I want to gift this to every teacher I know & hold it close to my heart & go read it to my kinders immediately. A sweet book, that will make them giggle, but also help them see the

emotions they go through are valid and show ways to deal with those feelings and support friends is a must for libraries and classrooms. May all of us be that rabbit for the little humans (and big ones, too) in our lives, and may we all remember this when our patience wears ...more

flag 4 likes · Like · see review

View 1 comment

Mar 07, 2018 Zephyrus White rated it it was amazing

How could I not pick up this book? My niece has a stuffed bunny to whom she tells stories as she's falling asleep. But that personal connection aside this book is wonderful. A beautiful simple story of empathy, support, and connection; this book teaches how profound the simple act of listening can be in an absolutely exquisite way. Simple, profound, beautiful.

I did almost docked it a star for making me cry in the bookstore, but I'm gonna let that slide.

flag 4 likes · Like · see review

Jun 08, 2018 Ms. Shoshana rated it really liked it

Shelves: animals, building, character, friendship, perseverance

Taylor builds something out of blocks and is sad when it comes down. None of the animals are helping - their coping strategies aren't Taylor's. Finally though, when Taylor is ready to talk, the rabbit listens and eventually Taylor is ready to rebuild. This is a simple and sweet story about overcoming something sad.

I also liked that Taylor's gender is never mentioned or indicated by the illustrations.

flag 4 likes · Like · see review

Mar 10, 2018 Aliza Werner rated it it was amazing

Shelves: acceptance-understanding, fiction, picture-books, wsra-2018

A beautiful and heartfelt book that shows the power of a quiet, thoughtful listener. When Taylor wanted to experience grief, anger, and various stages of coping, the rabbit was steadfast in patience, waiting, and listening. I particularly love that the MC Taylor is androgynous, with no pronouns that determine Taylor as male or female, so Taylor can be who you want Taylor to be.

flag 4 likes · Like · see review

Mar 15, 2018 emma rated it it was amazing

Shelves: 2018, beautiful-stories, favorites, home-to-be, picture-books, reread

i'm not going to lie. i cried a lil bit the first time i read it. i cried a lil bit the second. i took pictures to send to my friend, and i facetimed my other best friend just to read it to him and say YOU'RE MY RABBIT! we both tear up a lil too much when we are soft. sigh.

flag 4 likes · Like · see review

Feb 22, 2018 Linda Quinn rated it it was amazing

This adorable picture book is a gentle way to teach a young child, and remind the rest of us, that sometimes all we need is someone to listen.

flag 4 likes · Like · see review

Mar 01, 2018 Garrett rated it it was amazing

Shelves: story-time

This little girl had to go through the seven stages of grief at a very young age.

flag 4 likes · Like · see review

Apr 30, 2018 Kelsey rated it it was amazing

Sometimes we just can't "fix" things for others. It's during those times that the best thing you can do is just be there and listen.

flag 4 likes · Like · see review

Jan 15, 2019 Abigail rated it really liked it

Recommends it for: Readers Looking for Children's Stories About Emotion & How to Respond to Distress

Shelves: emotions, picture-books, toys

When Taylor's marvelous block construction is sent tumbling to the ground, the little boy is intensely

distraught, and none of the solutions proposed by the string of animals who visit with him do any good. Taylor doesn't want to talk with the chicken, shout with the bear, remember with the elephant, or do any of the other things suggested. It is only when a silent, soft little rabbit comes and sits beside him, offering comfort but no advice, that he slowly regains a better outlook...

Pairing a p

...more

flag 3 likes · Like · see review

Jan 04, 2019 Julie rated it it was amazing

Shelves: 2019-reading-challenge

Sometimes all a person needs is someone to just listen and not fix everything. A good choice for children dealing with loss, feelings and emotional issues.

flag 3 likes · Like · see review

Dec 18, 2018 Vicki rated it really liked it

Shelves: picture-book-or-board-book

A simple story and concept but with beautiful enough illustrations to make this worth it.

flag 3 likes · Like · see review

May 02, 2018 Arminzerella rated it really liked it

Shelves: picture-books, borrowed-from-the-library, animals, rabbits, grief-mourning, anger, sadness, emotions, feelings

Taylor builds something amazing out of blocks and is devastated when his creation gets destroyed. A whole parade of animals tries to help him feel better, but Taylor doesn't want their advice or suggestions. Finally, rabbit comes and sits quietly next to him. And after awhile, Taylor asks rabbit to stay. Rabbit does, and Taylor tells him all about what he made and how he felt when it was destroyed. Rabbit listens without commenting or suggesting or judging. When Taylor is finished, he shares his ...more

flag 3 likes · Like · see review

Mar 08, 2018 EricaEreads rated it it was amazing

Shelves: children-s-lit

It's rare to come across a picture book that so effectively teaches to both parents and kids, but this one does it wonderfully. Taylor (a gender and ethnicity neutral character) builds a spectacular castle, only to have it suddenly destroyed. Various animals approach and try to their characteristic methods (a chicken wants to cluck-cluck and talk all about it, a bear wants to growl and scream, etc) to cheer up the devastated child, but Taylor stays still and quiet until they all give up and leave ...more

flag 3 likes · Like · see review

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Betsy says

Lest we forget, the only reason that children's books were invented in the first place was to teach small human lessons. That is, in fact, the very backbone of the book business for youth today. Instruction. Guidance. Morally uplifting texts that will mold the little readers into fine, upstanding citizens. And because books like Little Goody Two-Shoes lie at the root of everything published in our day and age, we aren't surprised by picture books that seek to instruct. These days, it's funny to think that picture books do not solely instruct just the young anymore. I doubt very much that old Benjamin Harris could have foreseen the rise of the graduation gift picture book or the books kept in a psychiatrist's office for the aid of his or her adult patients. As it turns out, children are not the only ones in need of instruction these days. I call these

kinds of books “Message Books” and each year I collect the names of the ones that do their jobs well. Anyone can write a book that crams its morals down the throats of its young readers. It is far more interesting to look at books that integrate their message seamlessly within their stories. The best make it look effortless and easy. My latest favorite? *The Rabbit Listened* by Cori Doerrfeld. A book that makes me grateful to think that adults reading this book to small children will pick up on some of what it’s laying down.

For a second there, it was a most magnificent thing. Taylor had worked very hard, building the blocks into just the right configuration. Who wouldn’t have been proud? And who could have predicted the flock of blackbirds that swooped out of the sky, knocking it all down? Suddenly left with nothing, Taylor is devastated. One by one, animals notice the child’s misery and try to help. A chicken recommends talking about it. A bear says to scream out anger. A hyena says to laugh about it. Yet as Taylor rejects their advice they leave, and the kid is alone again. Only the rabbit, quiet and close, stays with Taylor and listens. And when, after Taylor has talked, and screamed, and laughed, and gone through every step of the process, only then does Taylor think about rebuilding once again.

One of the big trends of this and last year are picture books that tackle bad things happening in the wider world. Come With Me by Holly McGhee, Breaking News by Sarah Lynne Reul, and Something Happened In Our Town by Marianne Celano all seek to comfort and guide in hard times. What sets *The Rabbit Listened* apart is its universality. The event that leads to Taylor’s misery is an out-of-the-blue disaster that strikes without warning or reason. And just like that, you have a book that can be applied to broad disasters like hurricanes, school shootings, or terrorist attacks or personal ones like the death of a loved one. Even the name “Taylor” could be applied to either a boy or a girl, and Doerrfeld is in no hurry to clear up precisely on which side of the line the child lies.

I don’t actually recommend children’s books to adults unless that person has given me some serious prompting. But when I encountered a friend’s grief not too long ago, I recommended this one. My friend had been talking about the different ways in which people respond when someone they care about has experienced a deep loss. Doerrfeld herself has said in interviews that she wrote this book when two friends of hers lost a child. As a rule, humans don’t like to feel helpless in the face of impossible emotions. In our nervousness to just do SOMETHING we do everything the animals in this book do. We encourage the grieving person to scream, cry, talk it out, etc. and when they don’t we leave in exasperation (and possibly relief). For many of us, the idea of just being there when needed and not interjecting with our own “helpful” advice is actually very difficult. There are a few times in your life when the advice to shut up and listen bears careful consideration. This is one of those times.

Digital art is just too much for me these days. We crossed the uncanny valley and have ended up on the other side, where digitization is no longer immediately recognizable. With a gun placed to my head I would have told you with confidence that the art in this book was graphite and watercolors. Not so. Putting aside the hows then, let’s look at the ways in which Doerrfeld approaches this material. Generally speaking, everything is placed against a pure white background. The danger of this is that it could feel like an Apple commercial, so scenes are broken up beautifully. In three sequences the background is lavender. One of those scenes is tragic, two are inspiring. At first, following the moment of the disaster, Taylor is sequestered to the left-hand page. Characters enter from the right, which is fascinating since I’d always heard that picture book editors hate it when characters walk into a scene in a way that’s the opposite of the page turns. Then again, it’s possible this is done on purpose because it gives the reader an unconscious feeling that something isn’t quite right with the scene. But through it all, the white background has been a wonderful way of showing how alone Taylor feels through all of this. Just a small child in a big empty space where once there was something wonderful.

Listening is very in these days. I guess we haven't been doing much of it for a while. We might hear a lot of things, but we don't always listen. Some people are very good listeners. So good, in fact, that we forget to ask them about their own lives as well. In a way, *The Rabbit Listened* is a celebration of these people. The folks that selflessly put away their own egos and opinions and advice to help other people. In the end I don't know if I'd rather give this book to the people who do listen, in thanks for all they do, or to the people that never listen, in the hopes that they will. Maybe both. Or maybe I should just give the book to its chosen audience. Because the more children that understand the value of listening when tragedy has occurred, the more they'll hear, and learn, and comprehend, and empathize. And isn't that, in the end, what the best picture books do?
