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Laura's Luck



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Laura knows she won't be happy at camp...but could she be wrong?

In the second of three books about a poor family living in the Bronx in the 1940s, Laura, the older sister, has to cope with the pleasures and pains of going off to camp.

Laura's Luck Details

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Author : Marilyn Sachs

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From Reader Review Laura's Luck for online ebook

Amy Flink says

THis book is different from the other two books in the series in that it takes place in the country at a camp instead of the Bronx. Sisters Amy and Laura, following a terrible accident and a family emergency, wind up at summer camp (for like, ALL SUMMER! 8 weeks! WHOOA! Good Lord: what a nightmare!) I had a sad camping experience as a kid and like Laura, i was a quiet bookworm who was close to my folks and hated summer camp. It freaked me out to think of being sent to camp for that long since i could not even handle 1 week when i went! I read this book at age 11 when my social life spun out of control. I became very insecure about a lot of things and could relate to Laura. However, i think Laura was, well, sort of a crybaby. I didn't like the way she was always down on herself (then again, i guess i did the same thing to myself at that age) and i didn't like the way she complained about her braces; I mean, she should be thankful for what she's got. Braces are expensive and I wanted them bad at her age and was happy to get them; they are worth the money and pain. Also, my dad says when he was a kid in the 1940's they didn't normally put braces on kids. I think Laura should have considered herself lucky that she was on the way to having straight pretty teeth and not gripe about it, but I guess braces in the 40's were retched-looking compared to now so I don't know. There are a few parts in this book that irritated me. I thought that Laura and her other bunkmates let that chick Betty (an annoying character) push them around too much. I would'nt have. But it shows you how peer pressure works among kids, and all in all it's a neat book and I really would'nt change a thing about it, and in the end the author ties up all the loose ends and Laura is a more confident young lady who made a true friend, Anne, and some other friends. Interesting thing to note: the Apple Paperback copies of these books have no illustrations but when I was in grade school the school library carried hardback copies of the three Amy and Laura books and they were illustrated!

Erin says

I was a huge fan of the book Amy Moves In as a child, but somehow I missed this one back then. I found it yesterday at the library sale and cracked it open before bed. I love summer camp stories and this one was a good one. Nostalgic and pleasant, it brings to mind simpler days. I don't know if today's children can relate to these books, as that world unhappily no longer exists. I think kids reading it may feel cheated with their modern experience. Overall, this book was good, clean fun.

Barbara Bryant says

The popsugar-dot-com challenge for "a book you loved as a child" was a tough choice, because I loved so many books! But "Laura's Luck" is the quintessential story of preteen summer camp: the loyalties and factions of girls that age, the earthy crafts and the odd but memorable songs, the blazing campfires and the tree-shaded lake, the ghost stories and pranks, the self-conscious awkwardness and the friendships that seem they will last forever.

Singly or all together, the trilogy "Amy Moves In," "Laura's Luck," and "Amy and Laura" are realistic stories about sisters. Even though I originally read them 50 years ago (fifty!), they still hold up. Makes me want to go to summer camp this year too!

Cam says

Originally read this series of 3 books as a kid (maybe 6th grade). I decided to read the series again now and understood a lot more of what was going on, especially with the adults. Some of the plot lines and characters annoyed me, but some of them were quite relatable. My ratings are as I rate them upon reading them now. My ratings as a kid probably would've been a star higher for each book.

Shanna says

Laura, a city girl, has to go to summer camp for the first time. After a few bumps and struggles, she finds her place and grows. This is a charming story. I liked the characters, especially Laura's determination to maintain a positive attitude in the face of disappointment.

Katie Fitzgerald says

This review of all three Amy and Laura books also appears on my blog, [Read-at-Home Mom](#).

When Marilyn Sachs passed away at the beginning of January, I was reminded immediately of how much I enjoyed her 1968 children's novel, *Veronica Ganz*. Back in 2015, when I reviewed the book, I wrote that it was "refreshingly unburdened by the contemporary notion that every book is poised to make or break the reader's entire childhood by its portrayal of unpleasant happenings." I appreciated the book so much because it told the truth about how kids sometimes behave, and it treated the negative aspects of life as ordinary, run-of-the-mill occurrences that happen to everyone, and not as terrible tragedies that ruin kids' lives forever, or that must be overcome with the help of Very Special Adults. As I read through the three books in Sachs's Amy and Laura series, I felt that same sense that Sachs wished to present the truth to her audience, without exaggerations that make life seem better or worse than it is.

In *Amy Moves In*, Amy Stern struggles to fit in after her family moves to a new neighborhood. She tries to befriend an interesting girl in her class at school, and though this girl turns out to be a bully, Amy is afraid of what her classmates would do if she pursued a friendship with someone more worthy, but much less popular. When her mother is involved in a serious accident and must stay in the hospital for a prolonged period of time, things get more difficult for Amy, as the family adjusts to life with Aunt Minnie, who runs a household much differently than Mama.

In *Laura's Luck*, both Amy and Laura are sent to summer camp so their aunt can have a vacation from caring for them before their mother is released from the hospital in September. Laura, who is bookish and unskilled at sports, is not happy about going to camp, and her first few nights are absolutely miserable. After a stint in the infirmary with a sprained ankle and a friendly nurse for companionship, Laura comes out with a better attitude and a new cabin assignment to help ease her adjustment. As she works to become a valued member of her cabin, Laura also begins to see the value in camp.

Finally, Amy and Laura sees the Stern family piecing their lives back together after Mama finally returns home. The girls are sad to see their mother confined to a wheelchair, and their father has insisted they do nothing to cause their mother any displeasure at all, including arguing in the house or participating in activities at school of which she would not approve.

What stands out to me in all three of these books is Sachs's honesty and sincerity about the triumphs and tribulations of Amy's and Laura's lives. Her stories do not feel manufactured, and they do not manipulate the reader toward having any particular emotion or learning any particular lesson. Rather, Sachs present the events of everyday life the way they really happen - randomly, unpredictably, inconveniently - and her characters react reasonably and realistically. Because the characters are so believable, the reader is completely invested in the fate of both girls from the moment they are first introduced, and after a while, the plot almost doesn't matter, because the appeal of the stories is simply spending time with the characters. Though Amy and Laura are frequently at odds with one another, the reader is always sympathetic to both sisters, because Sachs allows full access to their thoughts and motivations and gives each character a balance of good and bad qualities.

I was surprised when I read Veronica Ganz to learn that it is set in the 1940s, and that fact was even less obvious in these books. Veronica actually appears in Amy and Laura (as a cause of trouble for Laura in her new post as hall monitor), so it's clearly meant to be the same time period, but there are very few details dating the books to the 40s specifically. In fact, so many aspects of the stories feel timeless, or at the very least more modern than the 1940s. Some of this is probably because of the writing style, which matches other books for kids from the 1960s and 1970s, but I think some of it is also because the characters' emotions are so real and therefore so relatable for kids from every generation.

This is a great vintage series for realistic fiction lovers, and a wonderful portrait of the complicated relationships between sisters. It is one I will recommend without hesitation to my own girls in a few years!

Susann says

Re-read over Memorial Day weekend; it was the perfect start to summer. The unwrapping of the birthday present from her mother is such a bittersweet moment. And that first rainy day is one of my all-time favorite literary rainy days. "Maybe the pies wouldn't be as good as Mama's but they would be apple pies."

11-28-09 review:

My favorite summer camp book. "For such a quiet, serious girl you certainly manage to get involved in all sorts of scrapes." Laura is such a meaty, complex character that she stands up well to repeated readings. When I was a kid, I appreciated her for being a bookworm and klutz. But Sachs also gave her stubbornness, mixed feelings about her sister Amy, and a touch of intellectual snobbery. (She's suspicious of Anne's giggling!) All of which leads to a very real Laura.

This time around, I also appreciated Anne's loyalty. She didn't have to be so nice to Laura, but she was always there for her. Love the cover art on my early '80s paperback, and I just noticed that I currently own Anne's Adidas!

Last read: 2-21-06

Shannon says

This was a re-read for me. It was one of my very most favorite books as a girl. Laura is a girl who, like me, was a city kid going to summer camp. Unlike me, Laura did not want to go to camp at all, but I read this book about 27 times while growing up (checked it out so much I remember my mother yelling at me to quit reading the same book over and over, ha ha.) I enjoyed the descriptions of camp because I just loved summer camp! It was fun to re-read and I'd recommend it to any young girl.

Arcel says

This book is from my childhood. I loved this and it makes me feel how to feel on camping and meeting new friend :)

Chris says

As a girl I was obsessed with summer camp books. This one was the gold standard by which all other books were judged. I wanted so badly to be at camp with Laura, who was one of my fictional best friends.

Melody says

Perhaps the quintessential summer camp story, if a little mired in period (John Garfield!). I never went to camp, but I'm fairly certain that if I had, I'd have been a lot like Laura.

Tricia Lynne says

Another one of my favourite books as a child.

Bryn (Plus Others) says

I read a lot of Marilyn Sachs as a child, and this was perhaps my favourite of hers -- the other Laura & Amy books frustrated me because of the sibling dynamic (which I could not relate to), but this one is just lovely, and having reread it once as an adult, I think it holds up well.

Karen says

Tracked down this childhood favorite after getting help remembering the title from a group on this site. I read it over and over as a kid, as I read it this time, I remembered a lot of the exact lines. Great book, I

always related to Laura (and still do) and glad I was able to find a new copy.

Hilary says

We really enjoyed this account of Laura's 8 week stay at a summer camp. Nothing out of the ordinary happens, but we get to see 12 yr old Laura come from the city, get used to the outdoors, trying things outside her comfort zone, make friends and experience nature.

Laura likes reading and finds it hard to make friends, she has an extrovert little sister who does nothing to help her confidence, but finding herself in a room with others she does not know helps her find friends and realise It's good just to be yourself. Their days are full of great outdoor activities, lighting fires, rowing boats, building shelters, whilst taking a share in day to day chores and getting plenty of exercise.

The only negative points for us were some attitudes towards animals, taking animals from the wild to study, this was only mentioned briefly, also at the start Laura had the mantra of 'be a good sport' this meant not mentioning things that upset or hurt her, I think this is a bad message for children and one I hear repeated in many ways in everyday life, IMO the message to children should be, if something happens to you that you don't like or hurts you, tell a trusted adult. I think by the end of the book Laura learns to speak out.

This is a nice account of a child's summer, precious time that should be enjoyed, so much to learn and gain from just playing and exploring nature and being a child whilst you still have the chance.
