



## The Stray Dog

*Marc Simont*

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A Caldecott Honor Book, based on a true story by Reiko Sassa and retold by Marc Simont, tells of a family who finds a stray dog. Beautiful watercolors.

### **The Stray Dog Details**

Date : Published (first published December 23rd 2000)

ISBN : 9780439442541

Author : Marc Simont

Format : 32 pages

Genre : Childrens, Picture Books, Animals, Dogs

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## From Reader Review The Stray Dog for online ebook

### Amie says

The Stray Dog was my favorite book this week. I actually read it twice and learned so much more the second time around. This true story is about Willy, a stray dog who spends the afternoon with a family picnicing in the park, and they all are forever changed by it. They leave the dog behind with the excuse that it must be someone else's, but as the week goes by, they can't get Willy out of their minds. They go back to the same park to picnic again in hopes of seeing Willy. When Willy rushes past them with a dog catcher on his tail, they rush to rescue him, claiming that he is their dog. And he is from that day forward.

From the moment you open the book the story has started. Marc Simont gives the readers hints about what Willy does for food and how the children desperately want a dog of their own before you even get to the title page. The text is simple and well-placed, but what makes this story so special is that Simont's use of color, light, page layout and cartoon style allows the reader to see how the mood and emotions change through out the book. Some pages are filled with color to show a fantastic scene while some have just a small illustration so the reader can focus in on that character and how he is feeling. I would share this with students Pre-K through 3rd grade.

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### Baby Bookworm says

*This review was originally written for The Baby Bookworm. Visit us for new picture books reviews daily!*

Hello, everyone! Today's book is the modern classic *The Stray Dog* by Marc Simont, based on a true story by Reiko Sassa. It's a wonderfully sweet tale about a little dog and the family who decide to give him a home.

A family is out for a picnic one day when a little dog wanders up and charms them. They invite him to share their meal, play with him and teach him to sit up, and call him Willy. When the time comes to leave, the children ask to bring Willy home with them, but the parents insist that such a friendly and sweet dog must have someone looking for him. But on the way home, the daughter asks the question that will stick in their minds all week: "What if Willy doesn't have anybody?" After a week of contemplating, wondering and worrying about the sweet little dog, they return to their picnic spot, hoping to find their friend. And there he is – but has the dogcatcher found him first?

Like many of the modern classics that came out after my childhood, I missed out on this book when it was originally published, but I'm so glad a friend recommended it to me! Who doesn't love a story about an animal finding a loving home, and a family bringing the joy of a pet into their lives? The plot is simple yet compelling, and the lovely illustrations do well to compliment and add on to the text. The length is perfect for baby bookworms, and JJ and I both loved it, so if you haven't checked this one out yet, you absolutely should. Baby Bookworm approved!

Be sure to check out The Baby Bookworm for more reviews!

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## **Sarah says**

I picked this book up to look closely at the illustrations. It was shared at a program on illustrating books. It is a cute story and really is told through the paintings. They are simple, yet so full of life and surprising little details. Simont's illustrations are filled with emotions and cleverness. I love the page where the girl and boy have the dog and the little boy who has used his belt as a collar is now holding up his pants. The final spread made me think of Seurat's Sunday on Le Grande Jatte. <http://www.artic.edu/aic/collections/....>

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## **David says**

The Stray Dog by Marc Simont is a Caldecott Honor book about a family who encounters a stray dog at a park. This story really resonates with me, since my family adopted a stray dog that looked a bit like Willy after he was apparently dumped near our farm.

Simont uses short sentences to tell the simple, emotional, appealing true story of a family that adopts a stray dog. Initially after playing with the dog all day, the family leaves him, thinking the dog may belong to some other family. The next week, quick thinking and talking convinces the dog warden to let the kids have the dog.

The illustrations raise this story to a near perfect level. Starting before the title page, we are wordlessly shown the stray dog eating from a garbage bag, then two children standing together watching dogs at a dog park. Another wordless picture shows the family packing the car for a cookout before any text begins. Two double page wordless spreads show a dog warden chasing Willy, and the kids celebrating after rescuing their new pet. My favorite pictures include the family thinking distractedly about Willy, and Willy's communal cleanup bath with the kids. A clever picture shows a water bowl and food bowl awaiting Willy at the second picnic. The family's red car is shown crossing what appears to be the Brooklyn Bridge twice.

The foreshadowing and showing of the children's interest in a dog wordlessly is wonderfully done. The story is seamlessly told in a combination of words and pictures, and richly deserves the Caldecott Honor Award it received. The only thing that would have been made it perfect would have been showing Willy visiting a vet. I have used The Stray Dog as a read aloud in Story Time several times and it's always a hit.

For ages 3 to 6, dogs, strays, pets, humane education, families, and fans of Marc Simont.

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## **Kathryn says**

A heartwarming story of a stray dog and the family who meets him on a picnic one day. They leave him after their day of fun, thinking he must have a family (or using this as an excuse not to worry about him) but the children--and even Mom and Dad!--can't stop thinking about him. Will he be there when they go back? There are some harrowing moments before the eventual happy ending, and I just love that, wrapped in the simplicity of this story, are so many moments of humor, suspense, pathos, joy and love. The illustrations are so charming! I love the little Stray Dog :-)

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## **Cassandra Lemieux says**

1. Summary: The Stray Dog is about a couple of young kids that go to the park and find a stray dog. They play with the dog the whole time they are out at the playground and decide to name him Willie. The kids go home that night and leave the dog there but they can't seem to stop thinking about him, but when they come back the next day, they see that the dog catcher is looking for Willie too.
2. Grade: K
3. Classroom use: I think this book has really good pictures and I would probably just have it on my bookshelf. It doesn't align with any lessons but it has good pictures and I would want my students to be introduced to many different books.
4. Students who would benefit from reading: Kids who like books about dogs and good pictures would like this book.
5. Small group use: I wouldn't use this book in a small group.
6. Whole class use: I would read this book aloud maybe just for fun. I wouldn't use it for a lesson.
7. Related books: "The Happy Day"
8. Multimedia: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zP5Fb...>

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## **Tammy J says**

What a perfect book. The stray dog tells a story about a family who goes on a picnic. As they are there, they see a dog. They don't know who's dog and don't know what he wants. Each of the family members comes up with something different about what the dog wants. They play with the dog and leave it because they think it is someone else's. They had a great time with the dog but realize they can't take something that isn't theirs. The illustrations are great and go along to tell the story. After they go home they think about Willy who is the dog and a week later go back to the same place they were when they met him. They wait for the dog since he isn't there when they arrive. After a while the dog runs by..We see in the picture that the dog is being chased by a dog catcher. The family is near by and fend for the dog. The dog catcher notices that he has no tags or collar. The kids are smart and the boy takes off his belt and the girl takes out her hair ribbon. They tell the dog catcher that he has a collar, his name is Willy and that he is theirs. It's funny what you will do for the one's you love. They give him a home which is so great.

Themes: pets, family, helping, learning about homelessness and taking care of pets. I feel we might incorporate citizenship and rewards.

I can recall a time when we took in strays. We always tried to find their owners and when we couldn't we took them in. This story touches my heart because my mom just took in a stray dog about two years ago. The poor dog was left cause the family moved. He was left on a chain with food thrown on the floor that he couldn't reach. I felt so sorry for him that I said we had to help him. He is such a great friend to my mom.

This book would be great for pre- k to first grade. It can talk about friendship and taking care of pets and going above and beyond to help others. Responsibility might also be discussed. Having specific jobs in the classroom were children can learn to take care of something or helping someone may be of benefit to them.

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### **Tanna says**

This book is another Caldecott winner. It's a cute story of a stray dog who meets a family in the park. The family meets him while they're on a picnic and fall in love with him, and name him Willy. After they have to leave him, the whole family can't stop thinking about him. So they go the following weekend to the same park for another picnic. They see Willy being chased by animal control. That's when they chase after him and take him home. Willy is now their dog and has found where he belongs, with a family who loves him. The story was heart warming, but I personally didn't think the illustrations added much to the story. There were multiple pages that were mainly white, and I thought that most of the other illustrations were boring. The only one that added anything was the chasing scene because there weren't words to accompany most of it. It's a cute book, but I've read a ton of other great ones that I would much rather use in my classroom. I would have this available in my classroom library, but have others I would rather use for read-alouds.

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### **Laura says**

This is based on a true story of adopting a stray dog. A simple story with nostalgic illustrations.

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### **Eva Leger says**

\*I'm not sure why this isn't already listed because I'm positive that we've taken this from the library and read it months ago.\*

This book is about a family on a picnic who see a dog while in the park. The kids ask the parents to keep the dog and are told no but throughout the next week everyone in the family, including the parents, are thinking about this little dog.

The next weekend the family is again at the park having a picnic but this time something is different. Two little bowls sit off to the side of the table, one with water, one with food. But no dog comes.

All of a sudden they see the dog run past with a dogcatcher running after him. The children take off to save "their" dog. When the dogcatcher explains that the dog has no collar and no lease and therefore is a stray the kids think fast and come up with what they need. The little boy has a belt that makes a collar. The little girl has a hair ribbon that serves as a leash.

After this the dogcatcher has no choice but to allow the children to take their dog. And everyone lives happily ever after.

The illustrations are so-so, nothing spectacular IMO and the story is fun to read but again, nothing overly exciting.

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### **Miriam says**

A sweet and simple story about a family who meets a friendly dog while picnicking and, after thinking about him all week, go back to find him. My only criticism would be that leaving the dog in the first place is not very responsible. Even if, as the parents tell the concerned children, the dog already has a family that is looking for him, the appropriate response would be to try to find the owners, or take it home and then put up ads, or take it to a shelter and see if it were claimed, not leave it alone with no food and the risk of being hurt by a car or other living thing.

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### **Hákon Gunnarsson says**

I like this book. It's based on a true story, and it does have less fantastical quality than some children's books, but the plot and the illustrations are good. It's about how one family unexpectedly got a new pet. A really sweet little story.

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### **Paige Green says**

The Stray Dog, by Marc Simont, is a story about a family who finds a stray dog in the park. The children fell in love with their new friend as they chased him around and taught him tricks. Once it was time to go, the family pack up their belongings but left the puppy behind. As the week went on, the whole family remembered what fun it was the week before when they played with the dog they had found. So, the following weekend the family went back to the park. When the dog came around the corner, they noticed a Dog Catcher chasing after him. What they did next allowed the dog and the family to live happily ever after. This story was short, but well written. The content was not complex by any means and gave enough detail which allowed the reader to sympathize with the characters. The illustrations explained the story better than the words. On the page where the family is leaving the park for the first time, the pages are white with a picture of a car on one and the dog on the other. This provided the audience a vibe that at that moment, nothing else mattered. The dog wanted to be with the family and the family wanted the dog. Also, on the pages where the Dog Catcher is chasing the dog, you can feel the sense of adventure and excitement as the bodies jump from page to page. This book is appropriate for most age levels and can be easily enjoyed.

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### **Kayla Asher says**

cute (true, right?) story about how a family bonds and gets their dog!  
dont read in korea -\_- the kids didnt understand that the people werent going to eat the dog (because they were at a picnic when they met the dog.) its not even common to eat dog in korea but it used to be and idk the kids were confused as to why the family wasnt eating the dog. ugh.

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### **Hope says**

This little dog will steal your heart! This Caldecott Medalist Winner can teach children what to do when stray dogs are wandering in the park. Could also be used to teach 'beginning, middle and end' for advanced readers.

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### **Stephanie Field says**

This book tells the story of a dog that did not have a home and of a family that fell in love with this stray

dog. One day at the park, the kids began playing with the dog and named him Willie. They wanted to take him home but their parents said no because he must have belonged to somebody. The next weekend the family went back to the park and noticed that Willie was about to be captured by the dog warden so the kids said he belonged to them and they were able to take Willie with them and give him a proper home. The illustrations in this book create emotions within the reader that the words alone could not do. They show how excited the kids are when they get to play with Willie, and how scared Willie is when the dog warden is about to capture him. At the end the picture of Willie on his new dog bed seems to show complete bliss and it is clear to see just how happy he is with his new family.

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### **Jordan Caton says**

The Stray Dog was one of the books I chose for my picture storybook. This book is about a dog named Willy who was found in the park by a family having a picnic. Because they thought he probably belonged to someone, they didn't take him home but the whole family was sad about it. On another trip to the park, the family spots Willy being captured by the dog catcher and claims the dog. This story was cute and I think kids would enjoy it.

This book was a Caldecott award winner. I really enjoyed the illustrations in this book, along with the colors. The pictures added a lot to the story by adding in different details. Some pages had huge double spreads, while others had a lot of white background with a couple pictures. This made me as a reader interested the whole book. The colors in this book were also great. The page with the city and bridge had such rich colors and I thought it looked great.

I would say this book would be for kindergarten-third grade.

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### **Jennifer (JenIsNotaBookSnob) says**

One of those books which is fun for small children to look through. The pictures tell the whole story, so even a child who isn't reading yet can nearly tell themselves the story from the illustrations. Text is sparse, only what is necessary, it really lets the illustrations do the talking. The illustrations are charming, they have a lot of heart to them. You can see why it received a Caldecott honor.

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### **Lisa Vegan says**

Charming illustrations! In particular, the many dogs are great, including the main dog, Willy, who's adorable. I felt joy while viewing each illustration, and it's fun to search and find Willy on the second to last page.

The story might feel a bit suspenseful for young children or others who won't recognize the formula ahead of time. I had a bit of a hard time with the family's original decision, although I did understand it. Overall, I ended up liking the story, even though I have mixed feelings about it. Luckily, throughout, there was some humor to go along with the angst. And the illustrations really shine. I've always loved dogs and I'm sure that

had I had this book read to me when I was young I would have looked at this book's pictures over and over and over, paying attention to and memorizing all the details.

The reader is told on the title page that this story is "from a true story by Reiko Sassa" and that Marc Simont has retold (and illustrated) it. Because of that, I felt touched. If I'd assumed the story was entirely fictional I think I'd have been irked that the story was trying to manipulate readers'/listeners' emotions.

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### **Kelli McDonald says**

I love this picture storybook! This is a beautifully written, and exciting story about a lost dog and a family who finds it. This is a good book for children to be able to predict what happens next. I thought it was so exciting that they got to keep the dog and I know the children do too! This book is an exciting story to read aloud to a classroom full of children!

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