



Waiting

Kevin Henkes

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Caldecott Honor and Geisel Honor Book

What are you waiting for? An owl, a puppy, a bear, a rabbit, and a pig—all toys arranged on a child's windowsill—wait for marvelous things to happen in this irresistible picture book by the *New York Times*–bestselling and Caldecott Medalist Kevin Henkes.

Five friends sit happily on a windowsill, waiting for something amazing to happen. The owl is waiting for the moon. The pig is waiting for the rain. The bear is waiting for the wind. The puppy is waiting for the snow. And the rabbit is just looking out the window because he likes to wait! What will happen? Will patience win in the end? Or someday will the friends stop waiting and do something unexpected?

Waiting is a big part of childhood—waiting in line, waiting to grow up, waiting for something special to happen—but in this book, a child sets the stage and pulls the strings. Timeless, beautiful, and deeply heartfelt, this picture book about imaginative play, the seasons, friendship, and surprises marks a new pinnacle in Caldecott Medalist Kevin Henkes's extraordinary career.

“The short sentences of the text flow with the precision one would expect from a master picture-book creator like Henkes. Little ones, to whom each experience is new, will know what it's like to dream and wait.”—ALA *Booklist*

Waiting Details

Date : Published September 1st 2015 by Greenwillow Books

ISBN : 9780062368430

Author : Kevin Henkes

Format : Hardcover 32 pages

Genre : Childrens, Picture Books, Fiction

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From Reader Review Waiting for online ebook

Barbara says

It isn't hard to see why this picture book garnered both Caldecott Honor and Seuss Honor recognition for its creator. Not only does it encourage multiple readings, but it captures an experience that is an essential part of life, especially when one is young. Youngsters grow accustomed to having to wait their turn, wait in line, and wait on the grownups in their lives to take them where they want to go or give permission for them to do something. Although adults experience some of the same frustration as they wait at red lights, wait in doctor's offices, and wait on stores to open or an open lane in the grocery store to be available, they have a little more freedom and independence than youngsters. The illustrations, created with brown ink, watercolor paint, and colored pencils, are soft and pleasing to the eye and make the toys seem almost alive. The text and illustrations follow five toys that sit on the window sill and wait for someone to come and play with them and for something to happen. A toy owl, pig, bear, puppy, and rabbit all have things for which they yearn, but mostly they are content to wait to be noticed. As the weather and seasons change and other toys join them briefly, they continue to wait patiently. Young readers will smile at the surprise at the end as the five friends find their numbers to have multiplied. One of the aspects that I enjoyed most about this book was how the positions of the five toys keep changing. Not only do their places change, but the directions in which they face, which would seem to indicate that some small hands are involved in moving them around. The charm of this one grows on readers each time it is read, especially if one considers that life is actually what's happening to us even while we are waiting for something to happen. It already is.

David Schaafsma says

The whole family is reading all these Goodreads Children's Illustrated book nominees for 2015 and rating all of them. This is #18 of 20 for us.

Waiting is the work of a master picture book artist and storyteller Henkes. He gets little kids and he sweetly and tenderly and not mawkishly or sappily reaches them. Parents and little kids alike love this guy's work, and we are fans in this family.

That said, I did not find the story all that compelling. 5 stuffed animal friends wait on a windowsill. We lose one, we gain one. The ending is sort of not what we hoped, but as Lyra (8) says, "it's the art, Dad," and I agree. The art is terrific, one of the very best of the year, and that is saying a lot, because there is some great art in these picture book semi-finalists. And this is one of the five best, in our opinion.

Dave 4 stars (4.5 art; 3 story)

Tara 4 stars

Harry (10) 4.5 stars

Henry (9) 3.5 (who likes Otter in Space and bolder, funnier vs. sweet and gentle ones)

Lyra (8) 4 (It was Lyra who talked with me about 4.5 for art, 3.5 for story)

But this is a story for much younger kids than any of us, so consider the source.

Laura says

Caldecott Honor 2016

I loved this one. Very sweet with soft, gentle illustrations. The story is one that I could read again and again. It feels like a classic that has been around for generations.

M. Lauritano says

Picked up Kevin Henkes' newest in my favorite children's bookstore for the beautiful illustration. After finishing I was unsure what to think. Let me be clear, I think the pictures are great. I love the repetitive use of the window; the visual smallness and simplicity of their world. But as far as the story goes, I wanted more. Seeing the book preemptively canonized as a classic is really weirding me out. What am I missing? Can anyone out there try to explain this one to me?

I would argue, and hear me out now, that this book isn't really about the experience of waiting. There are events that the toys wait for and then they happen. Very little waiting seems to happen between the expression of each toy's desire and the forthcoming event. As a child, even the briefest of delay can feel like an eternity. The feelings that can come with waiting-- idle frustration, desperate exasperation, the feeling of victory in the arrival of the awaited moment, or even the possible realization that the thing awaited will not come to pass--none of this is to be found in the story. This is most likely because our characters are toys, and inanimate, emotionally distant ones at that.

There are many great stories that feature the secret lives of toys. When you compare those to *Waiting*, it just doesn't measure up. I know it is completely unfair to compare this with *Velveteen Rabbit* or the *Toy Story* series or *Edward Tulane* or *Pooh*, but still...! Like a great number of children, of course I imagined that my toys were alive. But they lead active lives with individual adventures in a universe of their own. They would not have sat, half-dead on a window sill year after year.

I believe that there are far better picture books about waiting. *The Carrot Seed* is a great example (although it is arguably about more than just waiting). I want some conflict, some action, some suspense, an ending that doesn't feel so random and unconnected. It can still be quiet. I love quiet stories, but apparently not ones that pass as swiftly and calmly as this one. Somebody, please tell me the deeper meaning here!

Rachael says

Me: (hands this book to Sam after reading it in Barnes & Noble) Want some typically existential Henkes?

Sam: (after reading it) I have no idea what I just read.

Me: What the Henk, right?

Sam: I don't even know what to say about that.

Me: It's like... gorgeous and melancholy, and what even the hell.

Sam: Do you think Kevin Henkes just sits in an empty house, gazing out the window, and occasionally jotting down a few words in an old notebook?

Me: I picture him lovingly arranging a single slice of bread, a pat of butter, and an apple on a chipped porcelain plate, and then sitting down to his solitary lunch... but wait. What if he actually spends all of his time playing Call of Duty and screaming at the tv?!

Sam: Yeah! What if he's secretly best friends with Snooki?

Manybooks says

While Kevin Henkes' Waiting is indeed a generally sweet and tender little interlude depicting the meditative, anticipative behaviours of a group of diverse toys on some eponymous windowsill, personally, neither text nor the accompanying illustrations have all that much enchanted me. For while there definitely is a relaxingly soft quality to Waiting, there is also nothing much else present in any manner, not really any major philosophical concepts for either discussion or debate (and I have personally also not found author and illustrator Kevin Henkes' pictorial images all that riveting or even enjoyable, the Caldecott Honour designation for Waiting notwithstanding, with especially the rather minute sizes of the group of toys and the rather washed-out colour schemes used not being entirely to my aesthetic liking).

And yes, and also, that in one of the scenes of Waiting, a toy elephant (which is described as an interloper or a traveler) is simply described as not staying, as not remaining on the windowsill because it ends up broken and in a million pieces at the bottom of the same, that does kind of personally bother me a bit because Kevin Henkes seems to just consider this an acceptable and perhaps even necessary fact of life in some way. So therefore, I have not really been all that impressed with and by Waiting and would also NOT likely have ever even read it, had we not been discussing Caldecott Honour picture books in the Children's Literature Group on Goodreads (and while I certainly have not in any manner despised Waiting, it has also not really managed to much enchant me, it has really not hit any proverbial sweet spots).

Laura Harrison says

A new picture book release by Kevin Henkes is reason for celebration. Soft and gentle, Waiting feels like a loved one just gave you a warm glass of milk and tucked you in you bed while humming a sweet tune. A comforting and hopeful read.

Annie says

Gentle, beautiful, and deceptively simple. I'm so happy to see a book take the idea of waiting, which can be such agony for small children, and show so lovingly that it holds its own pleasures.

Agn? says

Such a quite, heartwarming and unexpectedly deep picturebook!

This is my favorite spread:

Simply brilliant!

Tasha says

The award-winning Kevin Henkes returns with a new picture book about waiting. Five toys wait on a windowsill, looking outside. The owl waits for the moon, the pig waits for rain, the bear waits for wind, the dog waits for snow and the rabbit waits because he enjoys waiting and watching out the window. Seeing what they are waiting for makes each of them happy and so do new objects and visitors. Some visitors stay for only a short time while others stay longer. They all wait together. When a cat joins them, she too is waiting but for something very specific and it will be a wonderful surprise for everyone when it comes.

This is such a quiet and marvelous book. Do not read it expecting action and adventure, rather this is a book about waiting and patience. It is a book that shows the beauty of just being, of mindfulness, of acceptance of your day. Yet it is also a book about the tug of wanting and wishing, about time passing and about being friends in the most quiet and yet deep way. There is a silence about the book too that is compelling and superbly done. This is a philosophical book, one that quietly sneaks up on the reader how deep it actually is.

Henkes' illustrations are done in a limited color palette. They have a quiet tone all their own in their pastels. The objects themselves have an old-fashioned feel, one of timelessness which is quite appropriate here. There are sections of the book done just in pictures, which allow the reader to see the relationships between the characters as well as the patience it takes to wait.

A gem of a picture book, this one is difficult to explain well but such a great read. Appropriate for ages 3-5.

Cheryl says

I dunno. Waiting, to me, always implies anticipating, which connotes exercising patience. But these characters are happy even when that which they wait for isn't happening. They're more meditative. Maybe we don't have a good word in English for it... certainly we hustle & bustle Americans don't have a strong concept for laid-back chilling. But we should, and Henkes knows that. Preach it, brother!

Wanda says

24 DEC 2017 - lovely illustrations. Waiting is not so hard when you have your friends by your side.

Kristine Hansen says

The pictures in this book made me smile. And I laughed when the cat was introduced and we found out what she was waiting for. Soft and gentle, this book is one about the things we wait for, and our attitudes while we wait. I think my favorite character was the bunny who just liked waiting to see what would happen next, regardless of what we are waiting for.

Carol Royce Owen says

I'll admit I bought this book solely because of the author. It's Kevin Henkes, an author who, in my eyes, rates right up there besides picture book writers Cynthia Rylant, Mem Fox, Eve Bunting, Leo Lionni and Eric Carle for their simplicity, yet beautiful language and rhythm.

Waiting is a quiet, peaceful book about five toy friends who sit on the windowsill of a child's home waiting for their turn at play. There is bear who waits with his kite for the wind, puppy who waits on his sled for the snow, owl who waits for the moon, pig with his umbrella who waits for the rain and rabbit who isn't raining for anything in particular, she just waits. Lastly, they are joined one day by a cat, and somehow five plus one become ten, and it's clear that this is what they all were really waiting for.

I have to add something about reading this book to young children. At a conference that I attended this summer, I heard children's author, academic book writer, and all-around child advocate, Lester Laminack, talk about reading aloud to students, and these words struck me. "We need to read aloud with no intention but to cause students to fall in love with the sound of words." This is a book that will do that. Please, teachers. Just read Waiting through to your students from start to finish with no interruption. Let them delight in the sounds of the words and let their minds imagine what these friends are waiting for without interruption and questions and instructions such as, "Hmmmm, what do you think the friends are waiting for? Turn and talk to your partner." As Lester said, "trust the author to do his or her job," because Kevin Henkes has done his wonderfully.

Jessica says

I can't believe I haven't reviewed this. (I start a lot of reviews that way, but whatever.)

Charming! Just charming! Everything from the pictures to the story is an absolute delight. Tender and lovely, and appealing to kids and adults of all ages!
