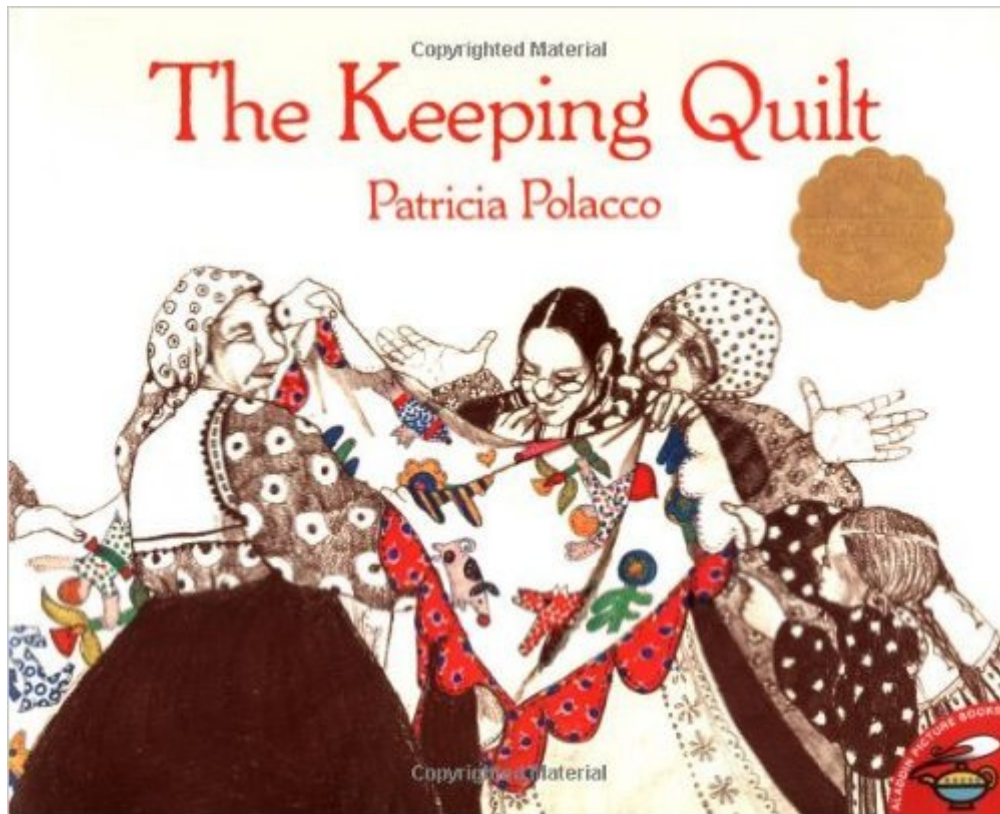


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# The Keeping Quilt



## Synopsis

"We will make a quilt to help us always remember home," Anna's mother said. "It will be like heaving the family in backhome Russia dance around us at night. And so it was. From a basket of old clothes, Anna's babushka, Uncle Vladimir's shirt, Aunt Havalah's nightdress and an apron of Aunt Natasha's become The Keeping Quilt, passed along from mother to daughter for almost a century. For four generations the quilt is a Sabbath tablecloth, a wedding canopy, and a blanket that welcomes babies warmly into the world. In strongly moving pictures that are as heartwarming as they are real, patricia Polacco tells the story of her own family, and the quilt that remains a symbol of their enduring love and faith.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 920L (What's this?)

Paperback: 32 pages

Publisher: Simon & Schuster/Paula Wiseman Books; Reprint edition (May 1, 2001)

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ASIN: 0689844476

Product Dimensions: 10.5 x 0.1 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 5 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 starsÂ Â See all reviewsÂ (130 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #10,773 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #1 inÂ Books > Children's Books > Holidays & Celebrations > Religious #2 inÂ Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Emigrants & Immigrants #33 inÂ Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Fiction

Age Range: 4 - 8 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 3

## Customer Reviews

Patricia Polacco's classic tale "The Keeping Quilt" manages to blend, in not all that many pages, family, love, tradition, the cycle of life, and the ebb and flow of events in one family which are anchored by just one thing: the family quilt. Made by the immigrant great-grandmother and her quilting bee friends, the quilt is composed of scraps of fabric from little girls' dresses, the aprons of aunts, and so on. All come together to form a beautiful quilt which features dancing animals, swaying trees, and all manner of beautiful ornamentation. The quilt serves variously as a quilt, a tent,

a huppah at a wedding, a tablecloth, and so on. Polacco uses the same illustrative technique she employs in her wonderful "Betty Doll"--the quilt itself appears in multicolored beauty, while the rest of each picture is done in subtle and evocative pencil. Because of this simple visual choice, the quilt and its many permutations leap to the fore and become, essentially, the main character in a story filled with realistic and full-bodied people. I have always liked the fact that Polacco doesn't draw pretty-pretty people. The little kids always look like regular little kids, with all the inherent awkwardness and realistic expressions (whether they be joyful or pouting or wondering), while the adults sometimes have worried or thoughtful expressions, bad posture, or wrinkles. Real life is going on here, and Polacco manages to capture it vividly.

Who else but Patricia Polacco can create a story about a few pieces of fabric that will have you singing, dancing, crying? If I tell you that I become overwhelmed at the very thought of this little scrap of a book, will you think I am overreacting? Actually teary-eyed. The rich patchwork of a family history, on top of, covered by and wrapped within a quilt made of Great Great Grandma Anna's blue dress and red babushka, Uncle Vladimir's shirt, Aunt Havalah's nightdress, and Aunt Natasha's apron. Through all of the events that mark a lifetime, birth, marriage, family meals, coming of age, deaths, we see the quilt binding generation to generation. In simple black and white (and shades of gray!) illustrations which we have the feeling were actually photographs, the quilt stands out again and again as the thing that gives each scene color. It is a symbol of all the things that a family hands down to each member. Wonderfully uplifting, evoking strong emotions, and a pure joy to share.

I was introduced to this author on videotape where she read this book to a large audience of PTA members. She brought the Keeping Quilt to show--it looked "like new" to me... The book paints a wonderful picture of grandmas, home, and knowing your roots. What is truly amazing is that the author did not begin to learn to read until she was 14 years old because of a severe learning disability that she coped with secretly all through elementary school. In that light, the book is a triumph for all those smart kids out there struggling with disabilities, and a challenge to those who would give up on the kids who are failing.

When Great Gramma Anna left Russia to come to New York City, she had only the clothes on her back. Soon she had outgrown her dress and babushka and her mother used these and other family member's old clothes to make a colorful quilt. "It will be like having the family in backhome Russia dance around us at night." As author Patricia Polacco explains, this quilt tells the story of her family

from generation to generation, and has been present at all their life events, births, deaths, weddings and other special family celebrations. It is the glue that binds her family together. Her gentle, poignant, simple text is only outdone by the beautiful brown and white illustrations, reminiscent of old photographs with only the quilt highlighted in vibrant color as it wraps babies, covers tables, is used as a wedding huppa... The Keeping Quilt is a very special history book about love and faith and our connections to each other, told with insight and wisdom.

Patricia Polacco is one of the greatest storytellers of our generation. She has put down snippets of not only her life, but of her ancestors, into delightful stories that transcends all age groups. THE KEEPING QUILT is about Polacco's Great-Grandmother Anna, who immigrated to New York City. The only two things that she still owned from her native Russia were her dress and a babushka. Anna's mother eventually takes parts of her dress and babushka along with old clothes belonging to other relatives and makes a quilt that will remind everyone of their homeland. This quilt serves as a source of comfort and memories for future generations. This is another book that I bought my daughter for her birthday. She will read this book to her second graders perhaps inspiring a new generation to write down the memories of the past.

I would grade it 60,00000 but you only go up to 10. Bummer for such an impressive book about a family tradition. Starting with the Great Gramma being passed down for years and years to come, this extraordinary quilt tells a certain story of passion and the gift of love. Storys, as I see it, tell the future and past. It's important to make your storys funny, sad, passionate and lovely, without that you have nothing but a story. It could be just a comedy or just a romance, but why not give it character? That is just what Patricia gave it. A unique sense of style is used in this classical story of a family that makes a special quilt that tells the story of old time Russia that is passed down, oh so many times. Patricia will pass it down too----and it will last forever. As nine years old, I haven't made a career of story writing yet, but it is clear I will, someday, and if I do I will admire the style of lovely writing when I write my own storys. -Anna Catherine Hyclak age:9 #1 Polacco Fa

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