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The Memory String



Synopsis

Each button on Laura's memory string represents a piece of her family history. The buttons Laura cherishes the most belonged to her mother—a button from her prom dress, a white one off her wedding dress, and a single small button from the nightgown she was wearing on the day she died. When the string breaks, Laura's new stepmother, Jane, is there to comfort Laura and search for a missing button, just as Laura's mother would have done. But it's not the same—Jane isn't Mom. In Eve Bunting's moving story, beautifully illustrated by Ted Rand, Laura discovers that a memory string is not just for remembering the past: it's also for recording new memories.

Book Information

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Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars— See all reviews (22 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #22,108 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #10 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > Stepfamilies #40 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Death & Dying #319 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Friendship, Social Skills & School Life > Emotions & Feelings

Age Range: 4 - 7 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 3

Customer Reviews

Laura is determined not to be caught talking to herself, so she grabs her not-so-pleased cat and recites the story of her buttons. Each button holds a memory from the past. Remembering these stories keeps her mother alive and close in Laura's mind. Laura uses her buttons as a defense against her changing world, but it just may be the buttons that bring the healing she needs. A great book to have on hand for children dealing with death, loss, divorce, and remarriage.

Prior to reading this book to my class of third grade students, I wondered if the story would be too

sad or "heavy" for them. Laura's mother has died and is dealing with her feelings for her step-mother. She has a "memory string" given to her by her mother with buttons that represent family memories. When the memory string breaks, she loses one of her most valued buttons, a button from her father's Army uniform that her mother had added when he returned from the Gulf War. My students loved the story and the wonderful illustrations. The story prompted many students to share their text-to-self connections relating to adjusting to a step-parent or dealing with the loss of a family member. We also did a writing activity involving their own memories and I had to give them very little prompting. The story had already stirred so many ideas and emotions in them, that they were easily able to write about several memories of their own families. I fell in love with Eve Bunting's writing after reading this book!

The Memory String is a wonderful touchstone text that lends itself to writing activities. As a member of the Louisville Writing Project, the book was first introduced to me and used in this manner by Synthia Shelby. Students create their own memory strings in a writing activity after being read the book. This can be done with all grade levels. As a literacy leader at Meredith-Dunn School in Louisville, I developed a lesson that I took to several classrooms in the school. Once students (and teachers) create their own memory strings, suddenly, they have all sorts of seeds of ideas for writing in various genres. It shows students that memories are not always happy and exemplifies the resiliency of the human spirit. My students were able to connect with the character, and with each others' memories, initiating more dialogue to help with their writing processes. Eve Bunting has written so many texts that can be used to facilitate writing as well as help children to make connections and to consider social issues and how they impact them their world and future. Susan Brokenshire-Prater

This is an excellent book for children who now have a new step parent. It helps them give the new parent a chance. Also I used this in my classroom to teach prediction and inference. Students loved the story. Some even wrote a sequel to it.

I enjoyed this book a lot. I think that it speaks to how difficult it is for all of us to accept new situations and how difficult it is to lose someone that we love. One of this girl's prize possessions is her memory string and as the story unfolds around it, we get to see her learn to accept the new turns her life has taken. I found it fascinating to go and research button charm strings of the past after reading this book and then help my daughters to create memory strings of their own. The

illustrations are beautiful as well.

This book was wonderful for two reasons. I collect buttons and I know how special certain buttons are to me because of who they belonged to. Also, I thought the bridge of buttons that brought together step-mother and girl was a big surprise to the reader. For someone who loves buttons, this story is very special. This author understands a button collector.

This is a sweet story about a little girl who loses her mother and her father is remarried. She has a memory string with buttons from different family members. Each button is a special memory about that person. The story tells about the relationship between the stepmom and the little girl. I plan to use this book in my 3rd grade classroom. It's good for a lesson on schema or questioning.

This was a touching book that attempts to tackle a very complicated and difficult topic (death of a parent and the subsequent integration of a step-mom into a young girl's life). It was very good but I felt it ended rather abruptly and awkwardly.

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