



The Widow's Broom

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A widow finds herself in possession of an extraordinary broom left by a witch who fell into the widow's garden.

The Widow's Broom Details

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Author : Chris Van Allsburg

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From Reader Review The Widow's Broom for online ebook

Mary says

An enchanting book with beautiful artwork-just loved this!

Maya says

Very nice and creative. I thought that the we should have more info about the Witch. I loved the broom it was very admirable. The pictures were also very creative. They were impeccably drawn.

David says

"Witches' brooms don't last forever. They grow old, & even the best of them, one day, lose the power of flight.... On very rare occasions, however, a broom can lose its power without warning, & fall, with its passenger, to the earth below ... which is just what happened one cold autumn night many years ago." So begins *The Widow's Broom*, the gentle, captivating book by Chris Van Allsburg. One morning the lonely widow Minna Shaw finds a wounded, sky-fallen witch in her vegetable garden. The witch disappears before dawn, but leaves her old, presumably defunct broom behind. Minna begins to use it around the house. However, one morning, Minna sees the broom sweeping by itself! Opportunistically, she trains it to chop wood and fetch water.

When the neighbors find out about this "wicked, wicked thing" (posing as an innocent, hardworking broom), they accost the widow and demand that the broom be burned. (Goodreads summary)

A hauntingly beautiful tale by Van Allsburg that is both a great read aloud and a thoughtful look at superstition, bullying and resourcefulness. The story effectively shows how people often seek to destroy what they don't understand out of fear rather than trying to learn more about what they are afraid of. In the process some readers may will look at their own attitudes toward others. The broom's stand against bullying and the widow's resourcefulness in dealing with the angry farmers and her bigoted neighbors is very satisfying.

The masterful sepia toned illustrations draw one into the story through perspective and make you feel on edge with the shadowing and bare trees.

Parents should be aware of the theme of witchcraft in this book that might be too sensitive to some readers who do not approve of witchcraft.

The big format makes this perfect for reading aloud. For K - 3rd, those who love haunting stories and Van Allsburg fans.

Rosa Cline says

A nice kind of "spooky" book for a little older children. A witch falls from the sky and gets injured a widow

finds her and brings her in and gives her a place to rest and heal. She leaves her broom for the widow and soon the broom learns to do household chores to help the widow out. But the neighbors think the broom is evil and wants to do away with it. The widow and the broom tag team up and prevails over the neighbors. True friendships

Arlene Allen says

I love, love, love how Van Allsburg refrains from making the witch old and ugly. The broom - steals my heart.

Vern says

Fun. Cool book. Can't believe I've never read it before.

Meggie Donovan says

I loved this book. Van Allsburg's tale is that of an enchanted broom left behind for a lonely widow. Widow Minna Shaw takes in a witch after she falls from her broom which has lost the ability to fly. The witch leaves the broom behind after she recovers. Minna soon finds that the broom sweeps on it's own--it eventually becomes welcome companion and friend. Things get complicated when Minna's neighbors become suspicious of the broom and ask her to burn it at the stake.

This is a fun and heartwarming book that could be used as a Halloween read aloud or in a hook-lesson for a mystery unit.

Melki says

I absolutely LOVED this book! Contained within these magical pages are an unfortunate witch, a kindly and patient widow, some superstitious neighbors and the most industrious broom since, well, this guy -

Truly wonderful!

Sahil says

I liked the book a lot because of all of the sharp turns in the book (When the widow actually gave Mr. Spivey the old broom with no power and when she painted the broom white to be the "ghost" but was really the magic broom.

Ronyell says

“The Widow’s Broom” is a haunting story from the great mind of Chris Van Allsburg and it is about how a lonely widow named Minna Shaw finds a friend in a witch’s broom, but is threatened by the villagers to get rid of the broom because they know that it is witch crafted. “The Widow’s Broom” may have some controversial material about witchcraft, but it is a brilliant read for children who love haunting stories.

Chris Van Allsburg makes this story haunting yet memorable at the same time as it details the story of friendship between a widow and her broom and the bond that Minna Shaw and the broom share together will definitely show children about the importance of friendship even in the worse of times such as when the broom was being harassed by the villagers because it was witch crafted. Chris Van Allsburg’s illustrations are highly beautiful and haunting at the same time as the images are mainly in black and white giving the story a haunting and old fashioned feel since this story probably took place during the 1700s and the image that stood out the most was the image of the broom itself as its handle actually curves when it is doing the work for Minna and because the broom looks so innocent and friendly, many children would actually like the broom instead of fear it.

Parents should know that the theme of witchcraft in this book might be too sensitive to readers who do not approve of witchcraft, even though personally, this subject does not bother me so much since I am a huge fan of Harry Potter, but the broom in this book was friendly and he only threw up the Spivey boys and the dog because they were harassing the broom. Depending on your views on the subject on witchcraft, parents should talk about this book with their children and see how they handle the witchcraft theme.

“The Widow’s Broom” is a brilliant book about the importance of true friendship and will be an instant treat for children who love reading haunting books. I would recommend this book to children ages five and up due to the witchcraft theme might be scary for smaller children.

Review is also on: [Rabbit Ears Book Blog](#)

Abigail says

Brilliant picture-book practitioner Chris Van Allsburg - two-time winner of the Caldecott Medal, for [Jumanji](#) and [The Polar Express](#), as well as a Caldecott Honor, for [The Garden of Abdul Gasazi](#) - delivers a deliciously spooky reading experience with [The Widow's Broom](#), a book which boasts both an engrossing story, and gorgeous illustrations. "*Witches' brooms don't last forever,*" it begins, proceeding to unfold the story of widow Nina Shaw, who aids the injured witch who crash-lands in her field, and is rewarded with the mostly magic-less broom that she leaves behind. *Mostly* magic-less, but still enchanted, the broom becomes a helper and companion for the lonely widow, assisting her with the chores, and playing the piano for her. Until, that is, the widow's frightened and superstitious neighbors, led by the vindictive and nosy Mr. Spivey, decide that the broom must be the work of the devil...

As with all good stories, The Widow's Broom can be read and understood on a variety of levels, whether it be as a spooky tale of magic, suitable for the Halloween season, or as a meditation on the dangers and futility of superstition, and (implied) religious intolerance. The idea that we often create a world in which our fears are brought to life, through a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy - Mr. Spivey believes that the broom is evil and dangerous, and his sons, having doubtlessly picked up on this idea, persecute the broom, which retaliates in kind, proving that it can be very dangerous indeed - is subtly conveyed in the story, as is the notion that things are rarely as they seem (love that surprise ending!). The illustrations are simply breathtaking: done all in black and white, they have a kind of sepia tone to them, and ably capture the depths of shadow and presence of light, in each scene being depicted. There is a sense of mystery and magic here, that is perfectly suited to the tale at hand. I think my favorite image was of the witch, grasping her billowing cloak, her face turned to the side: so powerful, so frightening and beautiful, all at once!

With a strong story, complete with surprise ending, and beautifully rich artwork, The Widow's Broom is a book I highly recommend: to anyone who is looking for engagingly witchy tales (at Halloween, or any other time of the year), or who is an admirer of Van Allsburg's artwork!

Noah D says

Great book but I wish it could be longer

Barbara says

This is one of my favorite Chris Van Allsburg books. As he often does in his picture books, the author/illustrator plays with reality and fantasy, adding a twist at the end. When a witch falls from the sky, she leaves behind her broom as thanks to Minna Shaw for helping her recover. Minna doesn't expect much from the broom, but it has magical powers and sweeps her floors and chops her wood. After her neighbor Mr. Spivey considers it the devil's handiwork and his two sons accost the broom, several members of the community decide to confiscate and destroy it. Minna gets the last word, though, since the spirit of the broom comes back to haunt the Spiveys. Just as I wince when I see that picture of the broom brandishing an axe in the woods, I smile every time I see that last illustration showing the contented Minna Shaw, relaxing and keeping her secret. If the neighbors wouldn't leave Minna and her broom alone, the two of them will take matters into their own hands. This book provides much conversational grist, and I like it more each time I read it.

Tracey says

A nice little tale for Halloween

Kathryn says

This is an outstanding picture book, both in story and illustrations. Part of the fun for me was knowing virtually nothing about it (other than seeing the high ratings from other GoodReads members and friends) so I will not include a synopsis in my review (there are many other fine ones to be found, anyway). Instead, I

will say that I was utterly captivated and constantly surprised by the twists and turns in this tale. It is a story of kindness, gratitude, fear and prejudice, acceptance and friendship. Many lessons here, though it never seems preachy or like a "message" book. I couldn't help but think of the Salem Witch Trials as I read certain parts of this story. A few parts may be a bit frightening for young/sensitive readers but overall I highly recommend this engaging and thought-provoking tale.
