



City of Grit and Gold

Maud Macrory Powell

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The streets of Chicago in 1886 are full of turmoil. Striking workers clash with police...illness and injury lurk around every corner...and twelve-year-old Addie must find her way through it all. Torn between her gruff Papa—who owns a hat shop and thinks the workers should be content with their American lives—and her beloved Uncle Chaim—who is active in the protests for the eight-hour day—Addie struggles to understand her topsy-turvy world, while also keeping her family intact. Set in a Jewish neighborhood of Chicago during the days surrounding the Haymarket Affair, this novel vividly portrays one immigrant family's experience, while also eloquently depicting the timeless conflict between the haves and the have-nots.

City of Grit and Gold Details

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Author : Maud Macrory Powell

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From Reader Review City of Grit and Gold for online ebook

Ms. Yingling says

I always love this period of history. Well done, if the text is rather small for middle grade readers. Why did I ever give away my copy of Rivington Street? I really want to reread it now!

Grace says

This novel's strongest feature is its commitment to the heroine, Addie, and her voice. The reader is never spoon-fed historical exposition along with the Addie. They are confused, powerless, and overwhelmed just as she is, and must wrestle with issues and dilemmas, just as she does. This makes the conclusion of Addie's journey all the more satisfying.

If I had a quibble it would be that the father, who represents the anti-Union view within the context of the novel, can seem like a bit of a straw man at times. But then again, as the novel reached its conclusion, I really began to appreciate the way that the novel uses the father. His relationship with Addie changes for the better, even as the divide between their politics and ideology grows. This is very true to life, but it also makes Addie's ultimate political choices truly meaningful, since they have a cost.

Overall, I really loved the book, and I wish I could have read it when I was in middle-school. These are exactly the kinds of books that I read when I was a kid, although I think that this may be more nuanced than what I remember reading.

Leslie Lee says

I often find books for young adults satisfying reads and this one especially. I began the book a bit dubious but was immediately pulled into the drama of the history of the Haymarket Affair and a family torn in their opinions of workers rights. Addie is a great example of a courageous young activist without being an unrealistic character. I loved the little touches of human frailty - like realizing you might wet your pants while on a very important mission. Why 4 stars? It's just me. I might have given Kingsolver 5 stars, once. (:

Stu says

City of Grit and Gold is a wonderful historical tale of the life of a young girl navigating the gritty streets of Chicago during the Haymarket riots. Weaving the wonderment of youth with a deep questioning of authority, the story grabs a hold of the reader as the protagonist finds her voice and learns the hard lessons of the labor struggle, the immigrant experience and family dynamics. A great tale for our time and an important reminder of a critical time in our history.

Cynthia Salbato says

chicago, immigrants, unions,

Heather Abel says

A truly marvelous book. From the start, I was deeply immersed in Addie's story. Chicago in 1886 grew around me, and I felt transfixed by the tensions on its troubled streets and the tensions inside Addie's family's apartment. As the central character, Addie is compelling, charming, curious, sympathetic. But even the more peripheral characters were fully fledged and interesting. I loved that the anti-worker perspective was given to Papa, an immigrant himself who is nervous about disrupting the gains he's made since coming to America. And I loved that Addie and her brother, who grow to sympathize with the workers' fight for fair wages and conditions, must come up against their devotion to their father. I read this as a parent, considering giving it to my 9 year-old daughter -- I will!-- but I enjoyed it completely as a reader. The plot and pacing are masterful. It made history come alive. And its themes -- of immigration, family, and the fight for justice -- have never been more relevant.

Cindy Hudson says

Twelve-year-old Addie loves to run and feel the power in her growing legs, but she's constantly cautioned to slow down, stay quiet, and do what her parents expect her to do. That's difficult in Chicago during 1886, a time of turmoil that saw unions organizing, protesters taking to the streets, even a gathering called the Haymarket Affair, when a bomb was thrown at police, killing several.

Addie wants to do what's right, but people she loves disagree on what that is. Her papa believes immigrants like him should work hard without complaining of the conditions, because the old country they left behind was worse. Her Uncle Chaim says workers should have humane working conditions and make enough money to support their families. Addie herself sees a vast gap between children like her who can go to school and those who put their lives at risk working in factories to help feed their families.

City of Grit and Gold by Maud Macrory Powell portrays the time of unrest that occurred in Chicago and other parts of the U.S. as workers fought for the right to limit their work day to eight hours, get paid a fair wage, have safety measures implemented in factories, and restrict child labor. Wide disparities between the sectors of society meant that many were struggling to get by.

When Addie sees her older siblings and her beloved uncle questioning the established order of things she doesn't know what to think. On one hand she has been taught to obey her parents without question. On the other, her budding sense of fairness has her wondering if the protesters are right.

Readers get a glimpse into all the important issues of the day through Addie's eyes as she goes about her days at school, in the street, in her home, at the park, and helping out with the injured and the sick. City of Grit and Gold is a small book, but it carries an impactful message about an important time in American history. I highly recommend it for readers aged 9 to 12 and their parents.

The publisher provided me with a copy of this book in exchange for my honest review.

Monica Fastenau says

Read the full review here: <http://newberyandbeyond.com/arc-city-...>

This book covers the time period in Chicago when workers were striking for an eight-hour day and a safer work environment, a topic I knew little about. Addie and her family face tensions related to the strike, as well as illness, injury, and their immigrant experience. The characters in *City of Grit and Gold* are wonderful, especially Addie, our main character. She is curious and resilient, despite the fact that her father and brother are constantly arguing, her mother never leaves the house, and her uncle is living in danger on the streets.

The book captures many aspects of this time period, from the illnesses and injuries that we think nothing of now but were life-threatening then to the struggles of the poor to scrape by in a world run by the rich. Through it all, Addie keeps asking questions and fighting to help those who need her help—even when her actions meet with disapproval.

*Note: I received a free copy of this book. All opinions are my own.

Jen Vanech says

City of Grit and Gold follows 12 year old Addie as she witnesses the struggles of hard-working Americans in Chicago in 1886. This book captures the tensions of the time- immigrants working to succeed while fighting for fair pay, hours and working conditions and families torn by political views. Young Addie offers middle grade readers a strong, brave, curious and thoughtful female protagonist to navigate them through one family's journey. The immigrant challenge of retaining valuable traditions of home while creating new and vibrant lives in America is clearly and eloquently presented by the author. This is a timely peek at our history, a story built on true events offering insight on themes just as relevant today. It offers an opportunity to see and feel the people, the humanity, behind the movement. A wonderful read!

Doug Bivens says

Even though this book is geared for a younger audience, i found it gripping and VERY compelling. If you can get hold of a copy, very much worth reading!

Akemi says

What a timely book for today! I am a teacher in Chicago, and I haven't come across a book about the labor movement engaging enough for middle school students. I was ecstatic to learn about this book since the narrative is through the eyes of a twelve-year-old. It certainly makes the reader think about the many challenges that the main character goes through during the very tumultuous period in Chicago. The book describes in great detail the abhorrent condition of workers, but it also explores a lot of issues relevant to what is going on today - immigration, police brutality, child labor, and unions, and much more. A MUST read with all the potential applications to our own lives!

Gail Nall says

The streets of Chicago in 1886 are full of turmoil. Striking workers clash with police...illness and injury lurk around every corner...and twelve-year-old Addie must find her way through it all. Torn between her gruff Papa—who owns a hat shop and thinks the workers should be content with their American lives—and her beloved Uncle Chaim—who is active in the protests for the eight-hour day—Addie struggles to understand her topsy-turvy world, while keeping her family intact. Set in a Jewish neighborhood of Chicago during the days surrounding the Haymarket Affair, this novel vividly portrays one immigrant family's experience, while also eloquently depicting the timeless conflict between the haves and the have-nots.

I thought this was a fascinating look at a moment in history through the eyes of a twelve-year-old girl. I couldn't help loving Addie, a girl who feels more at home moving through the streets of her neighborhood than she does cooped up in her apartment or tending to customers at her father's shop. But as protests and strikes envelope her neighborhood, Addie must navigate her way through a changed world. This book is full of memorable secondary characters -- Addie's kind Uncle Chaim who sides with the workers, her mother who barely leaves her apartment and is torn between loyalty to her husband and worry for her brother, and her sister Miriam who has a secret of her own. The story is as much about a changing family as it is about a changing city, and this only serves to make the book even more enjoyable.

Vicki Hames says

As the parent of 3 homeschooled daughters (now grown) I looked for books exactly like City of Grit and Gold. We have here a very real girl: Addie is strong, yet vulnerable (how does Powell remember so well how it felt to be Addie's age?), and her story is set in an intense chapter of Chicago's history. Addie struggles to understand her world, her family, her own feelings and how to find her place in this world that is at once frightening, exciting and full of potential. I found much relevancy here to today's world, and I adored and admired Addie and am hoping for a sequel.
