



The Angel Tree

Daphne Benedis-Grab

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A heartwarming Christmas mystery and friendship story!

Every Christmas in the small town of Pine River, a tree appears in the town square--the Angel Tree. Some people tie wishes to the tree, while others make those wishes come true. Nobody's ever known where the tree comes from, but the mystery has always been part of the tradition's charm.

This year, however, four kids who have been helped--Lucy, Joe, Max, and Cami--are determined to solve the mystery and find out the true identity of the town's guardian angel, so that Pine River can finally thank the person who brought the Angel Tree to their town.

This is a heartwarming Christmas mystery, full of friendship, discovery, and loads of holiday cheer!

The Angel Tree Details

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From Reader Review The Angel Tree for online ebook

Jennifer says

The is the perfect book for getting into the spirit of Christmas. It is no surprise that it was the number one selling book at the fall book fair at my school last week. The four main characters, Lucy, Cami, Max and Joe were each unique and any middle graders could relate to at least one of them. A book to read over and over year after year!

Becky says

Angel Tree is a lovely Christmas-y read. I think it is a good, balanced blend of bitter and sweet. I'll explain more of what I mean in a bit.

Pine River. Angel Tree is set in a small, cozy community called Pine River. Every December, a large community tree goes up. No one knows--at least officially--who is responsible for putting up the tree. But by the time this novel opens, the "angel tree" is legendary. (It has had a decade or two to get that status.) What makes this tree special or legendary is the fact that EVERYONE is welcome to write down their wishes and put them on the tree. Supposedly, in all the decades, the wishes have always come true. The whole community provides for its own, in a way. It gives every person an opportunity or two to be kind and generous.

Angel Tree introduces readers to a community, and it does so through several narrators/protagonists. One is named Lucy. She's blind. She's adopted (from China). Her guide-dog is dying of cancer. Her wish for the tree: medical treatment for her dog. One is named Joe. He's new to town. He's living in a small apartment with his uncle, I believe. His mom is a soldier stationed overseas. His wish for the tree: to spend Christmas with his mom. One is named Max. His house just burned down. His wish for the tree? A new house. The last is named Cami. She has a gift for bringing people together. And a musical gift as well. I honestly can't remember her wish for the tree since her wish isn't nearly as dramatic as the others.

So before the novel starts, these four young people aren't exactly close friends. I believe they are all in the same grade, and some have classes together. I think Cami and Max might have already been friends perhaps. Most of the book is about making friends, being friends, working together, thinking of others. One thing that all the kids seem to have in common--especially Max, Joe, and Lucy--is poverty.

Cami, I believe, decides that someone NEEDS to find out who is responsible for the Angel Tree. The person deserves recognition and honor. She knows she can't do it by herself, at least not in time to honor her THIS Christmas, so she involves other people. Can four kids working together solve the mystery?

The story is sweet in that it brings people together; friendships are formed; strong connections are made. In that way, it is an affirming read. The story is not perfectly sweet in that life is never made perfect. Even with all wishes fulfilled, life can never be perfect, stay perfect. For example, even if Joe gets his wish to spend Christmas day with his mom, she'll still have to go back. He'll go back to worrying about her when she does.

Amy Owens says

My 9 year old son read this and passed it on to me. He adored it so I had to give it a read. It's a very sweet book. Focused on giving and putting others first. Love that the kids in the story are experiencing "real" hardships. Great book for kids at Christmas.

Branwen Sedai *of the White Ajah* says

Such a sweet little book! Perfect for the holiday season!

Rhonda says

5 STARS

I enjoyed this story. It is a true Christmas story, a mystery, community helping each other and fun to read. I like the characters, the setting and it is a touching story.

Every Christmas a big tree is put up on the town square. No one knows who is behind the tree. They call it the Angel Tree. The children or people who have a need or a Christmas wish write it down on paper and put it on the tree. Others see the wishes that they could give or help take it down. Some are simple others seem so big as impossible to receive their wish.

One boy wrote that he wanted to find a recipe his grandma talks about from Russia. One boy who's home burnt down a few weeks ago wishes for a house. A blind little girl who's seeing eye dog has cancer and her family can't afford treatment for him wishes for her dog to get well.

Four Children decide that they want to find out who is behind the Angel tree and give them a Christmas gift. They are determined to find out and find clues.

Lives are changed for the better. Lots of people are giving and receiving. It makes you think what can I do? What would I wish for?

The miracles don't wait for Christmas Eve but are answered when they can. This is a story that is uplifting.

I was given this ebook to read and in return I agreed to give honest review of it. Net Galley and Scholastic gave me this ebook.

Courtney M. says

Lucy, Jack, Max, and Cami all have big wishes riding on the Angel Tree this year and decide they want to thank the person who started the Angel Tree tradition. So they team up and set out to look for clues in order to throw a big party for this special someone.

I gave this book five stars because it really tells you the kinds of different people there are in the world.

Everyone has a flaw and all these kids have one to, even though they are in a story, it doesn't mean their problems aren't real and living in our world right now. I would recommend this book to people who like action and mystery fiction books.

Julie Barrett says

The Angel Tree

Pine River, and every year a tree appears and everybody posts their wishes on the branches. This year the kids are determined to find out who puts the tree in the town square.

Valerie wants her seeing eye dog to have surgery, another boy wants a new house for his family. Angels take one of the tied wishes and make the dream come true but this year is different...3 kids combine their talents to figure out who the angel is that makes it all happen. They just want to give them recognition.

I received this book from National Library Service for my BARD (Braille Audio Reading Device).

Rita says

I really enjoyed this book. It reminded me of the Hallmark Christmas movies that I enjoy every year.

April Helms says

This is a good book for the pre-teen set; I know I would have loved it in grade school, especially around the holidays. A small town has an uplifting and mysterious tradition. Each year, a tall tree goes up in the middle of town. It is decorated, and residents who have a need are encouraged to attach notes naming their desire to its branches. Through the month of December, the wishes are granted by an unknown benefactor. Four children come together to try to find who the mysterious Angel is. Each of the children face their own issues. Lucy, who is blind, is worried about her seeing eye dog. Cami struggles with comparing herself to her more popular cousin. Max covers his insecurities by being the class clown. Joe, the newcomer, wrestles with adjusting to a new town and a new life. The four find friendship and closeness as they try to investigate the Angel, so they can throw a thank-you celebration for the benefactor's generosity. The book provides a nice lesson about not taking things at face value, and the benefits of giving. As I said, I think grade-schoolers will enjoy this. My only qualms- and these are minor - is that one, I thought the wishes of the children were resolved a bit too quickly; I know a part of that is to give more time in solving the mystery (which was well done).

The second thing involves a bit of a spoiler...

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I honestly thought the book was going in a certain direction as to whom the Angel was- that it was all of the town's adults, or at least several people. That would have made the most sense to me, rather than having the bulk of the work be done by one individual. Personally, I thought having multiple people involved not only would have been more realistic, it would have allowed the children to transition as "helpers" for the tradition.

These are minor points, however- this is, all in all, a great holiday story for children.

Stephanie Lives to Read says

What a joy this book was for me. It is a great Christmas story about the purpose of community. It is a juvenile book so things are tied up with a nice "bow" at the end. It was very well written and exactly the kind of great Christmas reading I hope my kids will enjoy. It can be hard to find books with a good message and this one accomplishes that. I won't synopsis the book as several other reviewers have, but I will say it was a pleasant read. The characters took a nice journey, each of their own related to their area of trouble. You got to know the characters enough that you felt for each of their plights.

If you are looking for a great Christmas read, or any time of year for a feel good story, please pick up this book. I hope my kids will be reading it as they head into this level of reading in the future. And the ending....it must have been the time of year, but we will say that tears were shed. Try this one!

Gabrielle Coleman says

The Angel Tree by Daphne Benedis-Grab is a book about four friends that are trying to figure out who is the person behind all the miraculous gifts from the Angel Tree. Lucy, Joe, Max and Cami become best friends as they work together to uncover this mystery. Along the way, they experienced challenges as well as amazing discoveries. They really wanted to find this out who was behind these special gifts so they could thank them. Joe was able to see his mom who had been overseas in the military, Lucy's seeing eye dog, Valentine, received treatment to remove her tumor. Max and his family's home was destroyed by an electrical fire and they received a new home, and Cami sold her precious violin in an effort to buy her grandmother a gift and her grandmother's gift to her was in-turn the violin that she sold. Each a miracle in its own way.

The Angel Tree is one of the best books I have read and I love the holiday theme to it! The author used different writing skill to make the book more interesting to read. Also, I enjoy the adventures they go on to find out who is behind the tree. The author used such vivid detail, I feel as if I am in the book myself, with them too!

I recommend this book to people ages 12-14 and grades 6-8 because they would like it the best of all ages, and they can relate to it better than older or younger people. Although, anyone who like a book with tons of holiday cheer, this is for you!

Ms. Yingling says

Pine River is a town with lots of troubles, but the one saving grace is that every year around Christmas time, an anonymous benefactor puts up a lovely tree in the town square. People put pieces of paper with their wishes on it, and the people in the town who are able to fulfill them do. Four children in town are especially interested in this. Lucy, who was adopted from China and who has an assistance dog named Valentine because of her blindness, wants medical help for Valentine, who has cancer. Max's family's house burned down, and they are in a cramped apartment. Max is a troublemaker at school. Joe's mother is in the armed forces, and he is sleeping on the floor at his uncle's apartment, and is also having trouble making friends. Cami, who loves to play the violin, lives with her grandmother, who favors Cami's cousin, who is interested in more academic matters. The four all are intrigued by the tree (and are all recipients of help) and are bound

and determined to figure out who is behind the tradition. They investigate several people in town, and eventually decide they know who is behind organizing the townspeople to help each other out.

Strengths: Lucy makes this a good candidate for #WeNeedDiverseBooks, and the theme of children in need is indicative of the continued poor economy. I can see this being popular with teachers who still feel a need to read Christmas books to students, since there would be a lot of community service tie-ins. Well-written, with nicely developed characters and an overall pleasant message.

Weaknesses: I did not care for this personally. It was depressing and required a lot of suspension of disbelief. I also am not a big fan of Christmas, and think that it is not a topic that needs to come up in schools as much as it does.

Nicole Monk says

So cute!

Emily says

The Angel Tree is like a Hallmark Channel Movie. You know it's going to be kind of cheesy, but you stick with it anyway and feel glad that you did.

The Angel Tree follows four students, who are only loosely tied together at the beginning. Max, the class-clown, lost his house recently to a fire. Joe, the brooding outcast, is the new kid in town. Lucy is blind and about to lose her beloved seeing eye dog Valentine. Cami is a budding violin virtuoso who feels like she is a disappointment to her grandmother and thus gives up the one thing she loves. All four students place a wish, a simple handwritten note, on The Angel Tree. Once on the tree the townspeople rally together to fulfill the wishes of both young and old.

Once their wishes are granted, the four set out to discover who the Great Benefactor is, so that they can thank her. After many twists and turns they discover friendship and that you don't have to be rich and powerful to do great things!

I enjoyed this book. Was it a bit cheesy? Yes. Was it sappy? Totally. There is nothing wrong with that.

Allen Steele says

Young adult book that I took out of the library. It was very good. Great story, good strong characters. It was pretty awesome. 240 pages, but went really quick.
