



This Is the Rope: A Story From the Great Migration

Jacqueline Woodson , James E. Ransome (Illustrator)

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The story of one family's journey north during the Great Migration starts with a little girl in South Carolina who finds a rope under a tree one summer. She has no idea the rope will become part of her family's history. But for three generations, that rope is passed down, used for everything from jump rope games to tying suitcases onto a car for the big move north to New York City, and even for a family reunion where that first little girl is now a grandmother.

Newbery Honor-winning author Jacqueline Woodson and Coretta Scott King Award-winning illustrator James Ransome use the rope to frame a thoughtful and moving story as readers follow the little girl's journey. During the time of the Great Migration, millions of African American families relocated from the South, seeking better opportunities. With grace and poignancy, Woodson's lilting storytelling and Ransome's masterful oil paintings of country and city life tell a rich story of a family adapting to change as they hold on to the past and embrace the future.

This Is the Rope: A Story From the Great Migration Details

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Author : Jacqueline Woodson , James E. Ransome (Illustrator)

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From Reader Review This Is the Rope: A Story From the Great Migration for online ebook

Ka'leneReads says

This is a GoodRead! Cute tale.

Jenny says

I loved how the author used a rope to share the story of one family and how they changed over the year.

Sarah Wheeland says

This is the Rope: A Story from the Great Migration

Text to Self: I related to this story because just like the rope in it, I have a vase that was my grandmother's and then my mother's and is now mine. It represents my family's history and my grandmother's life as a military wife who lived all over the world. She gave it to me when I got engaged to my fiancée who is in the Air Force like my grandfather was. The rope in the story was passed down and held special sentimental value in much the same way.

1. List all of the people who owned the rope throughout the story. (Knowledge)
2. Summarize the events of this story in your own words. (Comprehension)
3. Organize a timeline of the events in this story that shows the journey of the rope over time. (Application)
4. Analyze the importance of the rope in the story. What does it stand for? Why did the author choose to highlight that particular item? (Analysis)
5. Make a prediction about what will happen to the rope when the little girl grows up. How will it be used? (Synthesis)
6. Choose one instance from the story that you believe represents the rope's significance best and be prepared to defend your answer. (Evaluation)

(2013, July). School Library Journal. <http://www.flr.follett.com/search?SID...>

Charlotte says

This book is about a rope and how it goes from generation to generation. I really liked how it does that. This is a FICTION book. Only one or two things where NONFICTION. The author is Jacqueline Woodson. Its about her AND the rope.

Mariah Roze says

This is a really cute, simple story about generations and times changing. It talked about how her ancestors came to America and made a life for the rest of the generations. And it is told through a rope and all the different purposes of the rope through the years. This was a very creative book.

Kathy says

Summary: A jump rope becomes a representation of an African-American's family journey through time. For three generations the rope was used for jump roping, hanging clothes, and securing luggage to the roof of a car.

Curriculum Connection: This is a great book for storytelling. After reading, children can discuss the characters, setting, pictures and events. They can retell the story in their own words. The storyline is a great way to help them understand structure, sequence and the history of the Great Migration.

Personal Reaction: Although this book tells the story of how a jump rope represents an African-American's family journey through time , I love that children of all races can still relate by thinking an object that is also symbolic of their family's history.

Critique: (a.) James Ransome illustrations and use of oil paintings are inviting and visually appealing. The richness of color and sharp images tell the story without you having to read the words on the page.

(b.) The images are vivid and inviting, but Ransome's choice of color is sometimes questionable. On the cover, he shows an African-American young girl jump roping with a yellow sky and white clouds. The yellow color does have a serene effect, but I think a blue or orange background with white clouds would have been more realistic and just as appealing.

(c.) The picture of a Prince poster on the wall and Michael Jackson albums scattered on the bed are indicative of a teenager room and 1980's time period. I especially love how Ransom shows great contrast in his pictures of South Carolina (south) and Brooklyn (north). Ransome shows rich rural landscape when representing South Carolina and busy, populous images of the family's new stone-and-concrete neighborhood in Brooklyn.

Intended Audience: Kindergarten-Grade 3

Genre: Picture Book/Historical Fiction

Amber Murphy says

1.)Text to text: As I was reading this, I was reminded of several books by Patricia Palaco. It especially reminded me of the Keeping Quilt. The jump rope passed through generations and had different "jobs" in the

family, just like the quilt (or parts of the quilt) did in Palaco's book.

2.) Write six discussion questions using all six stages of Bloom's Taxonomy

Remembering: List two ways the jump rope was used in the book.

Understanding: What is meant by back home, using throughout the book?

Applying: Why is the jump rope significant?

Analyzing: What motivates the grandmother and mother to save the rope?

Evaluating: What did you like best about This is the Rope?

Creating: Create a new ending for the story (one in which the narrator is an adult).

3.) An adapted book review citation:

(July 11, 2013). Horn Book Magazine. <http://www.booksinprint.com.leo.lib.u...#>

Linda Lipko says

Using a simple, strong item of rope, the author creates a story of hope, of love and reflection.

The incredible images of Ransome and the poetically written words of Woodson reflect a heritage rich in beauty and strong in love.

Known as the great migration, during the time span of 1900-1970, approximately six million African Americans left the southern parts of America, traveling to the north in the hope of better, more just life with more opportunity.

The rope is used to affix to a tree to enable a child to swing high in the sky.

Years later, the rope is also used to tie objects to the family vehicle as it travels up north. This same rope is used to hang baby clothes,

to pull a duck toy, to offer as an object to play hopscotch with neighbors that are new, and, then again, later to be used again to tie objects in the trunk of a car that will carry the grown child to college, and to use to string a sign during a picnic, proudly proclaiming "We Are All Family!"

Everything that Woodson writes is stellar!

Alex (not a dude) Baugh says

This story follows a piece of rope's journey with a family as they move from South Carolina to New York City during the Great Migration of many African American families in the 20th century and how a piece of rope becomes the red thread running through a family and binding them together for three generations.

This is the Rope is narrated by an unknown little girl (perhaps Woodson as a child), whose grandmother finds a length of rope under a tree in South Carolina and at first, uses it as a jump rope. Later, as a young married woman with a daughter of her own, the rope is used to tie her family's belongings to the top of their car as they make their journey from South Carolina to New York City.

The city is noisy and crowded, but the rope is again put to use. First, to dry the flowers grown in a window box. later as a clothesline to dry diapers. And when the narrator's mother is old enough, the rope is tied around a pull toy for her. Then, it becomes a jump rope again, when her mother makes friends with the other kids on the block. But, the rope disappears for 10 years after her mother's brothers used it for a game.

But the rope was found and once again, used to tie belongings to the top of the car when the narrator's mother goes to college.

Later, the narrator's father teaches her how to make a knot with the rope and when her mother becomes a turner, the rope is once more a jump rope, coming full circle. But the rope still has one final task when it is used to hang the banner in the park announcing the family's reunion.

After its long journey and varied uses over time, the rope gets old and threadbare and so it is returned to the grandmother - a reminder of her past and how far the family has come since she jumped rope under a sweet smelling pine tree in South Carolina. And so, a new rope was given to the narrator - a new rope for new uses and new memories.

I have read *This Is the Rope* several times now and each time it has brought tears to my eyes. It never ceases to amaze me how well Woodson can tell a story using such sparse language, and once again, she has given us a beautifully written, eloquent book.

The story is enriched by the stunningly beautiful oil paint illustrations of the very talented James Ransome. Ransome gives a sense a country and rural life in his choice of orange and yellows predominantly for the South Carolina illustrations, but using bolder colors for the city infusing the illustrations with the sense of hustle and bustle, buildings and crowded streets.

This Is the Rope really struck a cord with me and I am sure that it will probably resonate with almost everyone who reads it, simple because so many have a treasured object like the rope that connects and recalls our family's past.

This book is recommended for readers age 6+

This book was borrowed from the NYPL

This review was originally posted on Randomly Reading

Jenna Langemeier says

1. The connection I made to this story is a text-to-self connection. In this story, an old rope becomes a symbol of family history, which is passed down through three generations. My connection with this is that I have always been very close with my family and I have received some family treasures passed down from my ancestors. Those treasures may not mean anything to anyone else who would see them, just like the rope in the story, but to me, they are truly special.

2. This story fits the description of being culturally specific about African American culture. This story represents the African American families that migrated north in the early 1900s during the Great Migration. They were seeking better jobs and better treatment. The storyline of the book is interesting because it shows

how a simple object--a rope-- was from when the girl's grandparents moved north and how it was handed down in the family. To me, it is representative of the hope for something better. The family moved north because they wanted something better for themselves and their family, as well as their future family. This story has historical and cultural significance.

3. Six Questions:

- Who were the main characters in This Is the Rope?
- Retell what happened in the story.
- How is the little girl in the story similar to you?
- What is the relationship between the family and the rope?
- Would it be better if the little girl had kept the rope instead of giving it back to her Grandma in the end? Why?
- How would you rewrite the story from the Grandma's point of view?

Jenny Christen says

1. Text to text: This book reminds me of The Memory String because it describes treasured items that are passed down in Laura's family and describes her family passed down from generation to generation. In this book, a little girl discusses a rope that her grandmother had found when she was little, then passed down to her mother, and then her as she grew older. It describes this family's air loom that is important to their family's culture.

2. This text is culturally specific because it describes an African American child and her family in which they tell a story of a very important item in their family - a rope. This rope was passed down from generation to generation and shows how her family is tied together and bound by this one object that is so important to their family.

3. -Who are the main characters in the story?

- Explain why the author gave the book the title it has.
- How would you classify the importance of the rope?
- What is the theme of the story?
- Justify the little girl's narration of the rope in the story.
- What inferences can you make about why or how the rope is important to the little girl's family?

Tasha says

Based on Woodson's own family, this is the story of how one piece of rope serves as a symbol for the changes that came during the Great Migration of African Americans from the rural south to northern cities. One little girl tells the story of how her grandparents moved to New York City, using the rope to tie their things to the top of the car. The rope was used to tie up the drying flowers from their window boxes that reminded them of home. It was used by the little girl's mother to tug her toys and play jump rope. It tied her mother's belongings to another car when she went off to college. Then it was used for more jump rope with the little girl and in the end to support the banner for their family reunion. In the end, it was returned to the original grandmother in exchange for a new rope to jump with.

Woodson adheres to a strict structure in this book that really makes it feel like folklore, connecting it verbally to other histories, other migrations, other families. Each page begins with “This is the rope...” and then moves on to tell the next thing that the rope was used for in this changing family. Turning the pages, readers can see the time change and the opportunities progress.

Ransome’s illustrations are lovely. His paintings capture light and its movement as well as the family as they change. Most of them catch those fleeting moments of life, each connected by the symbol of rope. The result is a rich and warm series of memories.

Beautifully written and illustrated, this book captures a period of time not seen in most picture books and a story of one family’s history. Appropriate for ages 5-7.

Yvonne says

Jacqueline Woodson took an ordinary piece of rope and transformed it into a symbol for change. This rope was found underneath a tree in South Carolina, by the narrator’s grandmother. This rope represented change and hope for this family of African Americans and over six million others during the Great Migration of the 1900’s. During the Great Migration, African Americans were moving north to find a better life for their families. The rope was used to tie luggage to the roof of a car during a move from South Carolina to New York City. From there it was used to dry flowers, to hang clothes to dry in the breeze, as a jump rope, and many other things. In the end, the frayed and tattered rope was the one that the narrator traded in for a new one from her grandmother, so the rope went full circle.

This rope is part of a family’s history. I believe this rope was probably used for unspeakable things before it was found underneath the tree by the narrator’s grandmother. What a transformation!! This rope helped this African American family to move to a place in this country where they were accepted, instead of shunned. This rope was part of the wonderful life they built in New York.

This book could be used in a segregation/desegregation history unit for third grade up to sixth grade. The teacher could brainstorm ideas with the children about other things that could be done with the rope. To connect the children to the book at a deeper level a teacher could have her children share things that have been a part of their family for generations, either by verbally sharing during class or by writing about the items in their journals.

Sara Hinchliff says

This is the Rope: A Story from the Great Migration is another beautiful historical fiction tale of African American heroism by Jacqueline Woodson. In this multi generational fictional memoir a simple length of rope links grandmother, mother and daughter to their roots and helps them find the strength to face new futures. Woodson has an amazing ability to give a complicated story a simplicity that K-3 children will understand and appreciate without loosing the poignancy such a story deserves.

This is the Rope offers parents and educators a perfect opportunity to discuss this difficult topic. It could be

in the form specifically about African American's movement to the North or could be read as one of many stories of a people's migration to safer lands. For younger children, the focus may be on family, and what binds families no matter their locations. Children could even talk about or draw a memento or activity their own family cherishes, or come up with words or pictures that might represent their family.

Barbara says

Sometimes the most insignificant items can turn out to have great importance as they follow us along our life journeys. This picture book from gifted storyteller Jacqueline Woodson tells the story of a rope that the narrator's grandmother used to skip when she was a girl in South Carolina. The rope comes in handy when her grown-up grandmother and her grandfather join others who are migrating north for better opportunities. As the family grows and changes, with some members leaving and others returning, the rope that reminds them of home down South remains with them, a fraying bit that symbolizes where they've been and where they might be going. An Author's Note explains that the story is based on her family's migration--one family among the 6 million African Americans who left the South behind--during the 1900s, and that the rope symbolizes the family's hope that things would be better. I like the story with its pitch-perfect words and luminous, family-filled illustrations more with every reading.
