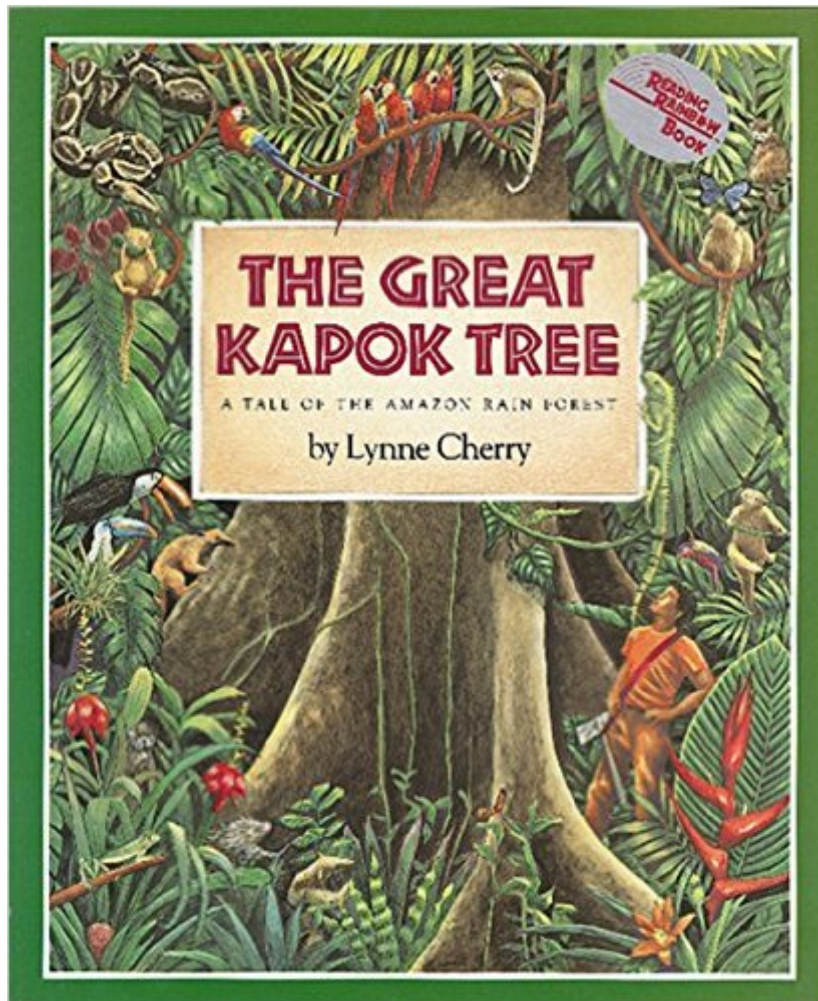


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The Great Kapok Tree: A Tale Of The Rain Forest



Synopsis

The author and artist Lynne Cherry journeyed deep into the rain forests of Brazil to write and illustrate her gorgeous picture book *The Great Kapok Tree: A Tale of the Rain Forest* (1990). One day, a man exhausts himself trying to chop down a giant kapok tree. While he sleeps, the forest's residents, including a child from the Yanomamo tribe, whisper in his ear about the importance of trees and how "all living things depend on one another" . . . and it works. Cherry's lovingly rendered colored pencil and watercolor drawings of all the "wondrous and rare animals" evoke the lush rain forests, as well as stunning world maps bordered by tree porcupines, emerald tree boas, and dozens more fascinating creatures. Awards: IRA Teacher's Choice (1991), ABA's Pick of the Lists, Reading Rainbow Review Book, NSTA-CBC Outstanding Trade Book for Children

Book Information

Paperback: 40 pages

Publisher: HMH Books for Young Readers; 1 edition (March 13, 2000)

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Product Dimensions: 9 x 0.2 x 11 inches

Shipping Weight: 7.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (92 customer reviews)

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Age Range: 4 - 7 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 3

Customer Reviews

This is a beautifully illustrated fable of interdependence in the rain forest. As a teacher, I use this story to teach about ecosystems here at home. Even though it is appropriate for younger children, I read it to my outdoor school students (5th-6th grade) on the day we study ecosystems to help them understand the inter-relationships we see and study in the field. I like to bring the story to life by giving the animals special voices (lots of hisssing for the snake, chattering for the monkeys,

squawking for the birds, etc.) At first the students laugh and are amused by the voices, but when the tree frogs talk about ruined lives and being left homeless, they begin to get more serious, and by the time the sloth asks "How much is beauty worth? Can you live without it?" they are fully engrossed. After reading the story, I send the students out to find a "magic spot" to do a writing assignment: write their own story of "The Great _____" substituting a plant they have learned about during their week at outdoor school for Kapok Tree. The only thing I don't like about this story is that students, in their black and white morality, sometimes only take home the message that "it's bad to cut down trees." I like the book "The Gift of the Tree" because it doesn't have this morality tale aspect, and "Just a Dream," because it places responsibility on each of our shoulders, not just "someone" like the tree cutter in this story. But I use this story in conjunction with those others and discuss this issue with the students. This is definitely a classic in Children's Environmental Literature!

Beautiful, wild places inspire and I love to introduce this concept to young children who are so very sensitive to the beauty around them. Children love to produce images of a world butterflies, rainbows and flowers. Lynne Cherry uses this love to capture and intrigue children in her book about The Great Kapok Tree set in the heart of the rain forest. Ms Cherry is an author and illustrator of children's books who has a sensitivity for ecological issues. In The Great Kapok Tree she presents a jungle teeming with life. A man tires as he begins cutting the great tree down with an ax. He tires and sleeps. While he sleeps the animals come out of the rain forest to give him a lesson about the importance of the tree. Snakes, monkeys, butterflies, parrots, toucans, frogs jaguars and sloths all give him a pitch. Each tree is important in the rain forest. Lynne Cherry's illustrations are gorgeous, green and so alive. Her inspiration was the rain forest which she traveled to and sketch while researching this book. Each page impresses the reader with the lushness and beauty of the region. While it may seem that the concept of ecology is a bit sophisticated for a four year old it is important to remember that our early values shape our lives. It is my hope that the children of today will have of deep love of nature that will inspire them to take the necessary care of the earth in their future. This book is a wonderful gift to a child. I have read it to children numerous times and they are always mesmerized by it.

My son and I love this book. We received it as a prize at an Earth Day celebration and have gotten a lot of use out of it. I love the beautiful pictures and my son loves it when I make up voices for each of the animals. I feel good about reading this book to him, because the message is clear. We live on a planet with many cultures and many other living creatures. We should respect that. I have gone

out to check out other books by Lynne Cherry and love them all. But The Great Kapok Tree remains my favorite.

My kids age 7 and 5 absolutely love this book. It is the one we check out the most from the library and they have been asking for it to keep at home "always". The first time we read it, I made up different voices for each animal that spoke to the man and now my 7 year old can read most of it herself and she does the same to entertain her little brother. The pictures and colors are glorious and the story teaches a valuable lesson about saving the environment.

Dear Readers, This book intrigues the imagination of children through the pictures and characters used within the story. The story is about how individuals need to respect others. It teaches children to be concerned about the world around them. Everyone needs to explore the world and strive to make it a better place in which to live. Many lessons can be taught by using this book. Students could complete a writing assignment in which they write to organizations that are trying to save the rain forest. They could offer their suggestions on how we could go about this difficult task. Through discussion and exploration of the world around them children could learn how every living creature relies on the other for survival. A mini-lesson on feeling and emotions could be taught with the use of this book. Students within my classroom have acted this story out by presenting a classroom play. They have written letters of concern about the destruction of the rain forest and its vast resources and animals. During the school year we have researched the products that are produced because of materials obtained from the rain forest and how they effect their own lives. The students within my classroom located several sources on the rain forest through the Internet, books, and magazines to enable them to develop a HyperStudio presentation about the rain forest. All of these projects and lessons involved cooperative learning, fun, and researching. Children need the opportunity to explore the world through a variety of methods. Life is what you make of it.

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