



The Most Beautiful Place in the World

By Ann Cameron

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"Seven-year-old Juan lives in Guatemala, a place of stunning beauty and grim economic reality. Abandoned by his mother, Juan lives with his grandmother and shines shoes. He passionately wants to attend school, but fears Grandmother will say no. Finally gathering his courage, he is surprised when she not only agrees to send him to school but also chides him about the importance of standing up for himself. Juan tells this bittersweet story, which reads smoothly and powerfully on several levels, with warmth and dignity."--*Booklist*.

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Grade 2-5 Juan lives in a remote Guatemalan lake village, physically beautiful, yet desolate with the poverty that is matter-of-factly described by the young protagonist. When Juan's mother wants to remarry, the new man refuses to accept Juan, and he lives with his grandmother, who provides him with a shoeshine kit and puts him to work. Juan teaches himself to read some of the street signs by asking his customers to tell him what the letters are, and eventually asks his grandmother if he can go to school, knowing that she needs the money that he earns. All is well, however; Grandmother simply hasn't remembered that Juan is now old enough for school. Her own surprise is nothing compared to readers', though, when they discover that this boy, virtually on his own for years, is only seven years old. Colorful descriptions of the tropical beauty of Guatemala almost gloss over the exigencies of poverty. Cameron's style has almost a fairy-tale quality in that she takes no positions as to the rights and wrongs of the characters' situations or behaviors. Juan accepts all with stoicism, regarding the loss of his bed as worse than the loss of mother and father. He reflects that he still has his grandmother (even though her protection seems rather scanty). Their hand-to-mouth existence is redeemed by their attitudes about lifeGrandmother's that the most beautiful place in the world is "anyplace you can hold your head up," and Juan's that that place is "where you love somebody. . .and you know that person loves you." A small , first-chapter book that is a very satisfying example of human values; a serious book for serious moments. Ruth Semrau, Lovejoy School, McKinney, Tex.

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From the Inside Flap

"Seven-year-old Juan lives in Guatemala, a place of stunning beauty and grim economic reality. Abandoned by his mother, Juan lives with his grandmother and shines shoes. He passionately wants to attend school, but fears Grandmother will say no. Finally gathering his courage, he is surprised when she not only agrees to send him to school but also chides him about the importance of standing up for himself. Juan tells this bittersweet story, which reads smoothly and powerfully on several levels, with warmth and dignity."--
"Booklist.

About the Author

Ann Cameron says she writes books to "capture the positive energy of life," a statement fully supported by *The Most Beautiful Place in the World*. She is the best-selling author of many popular books for children, including *The Stories Julian Tells*, *More Stories Julian Tells*, *The Stories Huey Tells*, and *More Stories Huey Tells*. Ms. Cameron lives in Guatemala.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Nelson Wyatt:

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Deborah Hart:

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Christopher McCrady:

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Marlyn Melia:

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