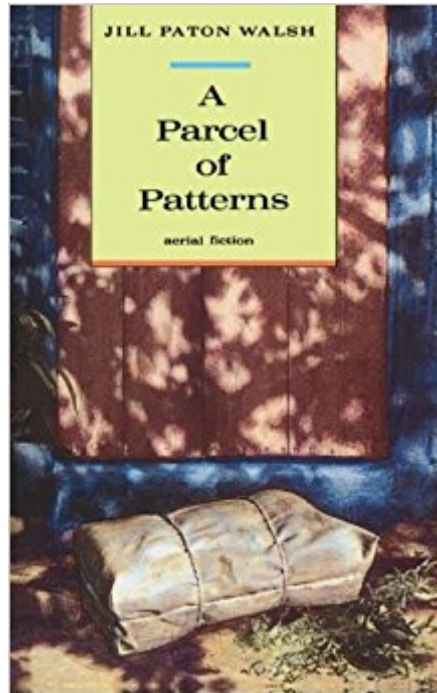


The book was found

A Parcel Of Patterns: Aerial Fiction



Synopsis

"A parcel of patterns brought the plague to Eyam. A parcel sent up from London to George Vicars, a journeyman tailor, who was lodging with Mrs. Cooper in a cottage by the west end of the churchyard. So begins Mall Percival's account of how her village of Eyam struggled against the plague. George Vicars dies on September 6, 1665, and by the end of October, twenty-five more townsfolk have been buried. As the deaths continue, the villagers, including Mall, begin to panic--helpless to fight off the disease. Uncertain as to how it is contracted and passed from one person to another, Mall forces herself to make a sacrifice that radically changes her life--she decides to stop seeing Thomas Torre, a man from another village, the man she hopes to marry. In June of 1666, at their minister's urging, the entire village makes a pact to protect those who live in the surrounding countryside by staying within the boundaries of Eyam. Although Mall longs to see Thomas, she remains steadfast in her resolution, until one day Thomas runs into the center of Eyam, knowing that he will not be allowed to leave, yet fearing that Mall has died. Mall and Thomas marry, but their happiness is short-lived. Finally, in October of 1666, the pestilence subsides. Mall, overwhelmed by grief and sorrow, decides to write a chronicle of all she has witnessed in Eyam, hoping that it will set her free.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 1230L (What's this?)

Series: Aerial Fiction

Paperback: 144 pages

Publisher: Square Fish; Reprint edition (September 1, 1992)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0374457433

ISBN-13: 978-0374457433

Product Dimensions: 4.1 x 0.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 5.9 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.9 out of 5 stars 17 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #343,586 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #256 in [Books > Teens >](#)

[Historical Fiction > Europe](#) #12402 in [Books > Teens > Literature & Fiction](#) #59770

in [Books > Children's Books](#)

Age Range: 12 - 18 years

Grade Level: 7 - 12

Customer Reviews

In a boxed review, PW lauded this "beautifully written, meaningful story"--based on a 17th-century English event--about suffering, heroism and cowardice during an outbreak of the plague in a Derbyshire village. Ages 12-up. Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Grade 7-12? Talented British actress Brigit Forsyth becomes young Mall Percival to recount Jill Paton Walsh's touching story (FS&G, 1992 pap.) of life in medieval England following the Restoration and religious turmoil and through the death and devastation caused by the Bubonic plague. Her good diction and clear enunciation make it easy for listeners to follow the regional accents and varied levels of education of the speakers in the town. Her speech is steady and appropriately paced. There is no hesitation with the unusual sentence structure of the time period. The emotions of the characters are effectively portrayed; grief, fear, love, anger are naturally reflected in her voice and never seem artificial or contrived. The producer has made it easy for one to read along with the narration as the corresponding page numbers are printed on each side of the tapes. This excellent presentation will make it possible for a young lady of 1665 to visit with the youth of 1996. Claudia Moore, W.T. Woodson High School, Fairfax, VA Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Awesome and heart-breaking; this is what the Great Plague was REALLY like

We checked out the audio book from our public library for a bedtime "read." My daughter would have been nine or ten then, and did not find it boring. I found it interesting that after the romantic love interest died, Mall married the young man who was her friend. I found it a refreshing contrast to the princess-love-at-first-sight message. In the end, she and the friend husband left for America to resume living as Puritans, who were not faring well in England then, so there is connection to the American colonies. How often do we even see religious conflicts in young adult fiction? We were aware that the story was reality based because my daughter's English teacher had grown up near Eyam.

Recalling what I liked and didn't like to read as a teenager, I am not surprised at the less-than-glowing reviews some kids have given *A Parcel of Patterns*. The old English speech patterns, though effective, do slow down comprehension of the plot, which centers upon 2 romances blossoming amongst a plague epidemic in 17th century England. As an avid but adult

reader of medieval/Renaissance history, I can say that this book is a wonderful presentation of the experience of surviving amongst the hardships of everyday life, the Protestant religious conflicts, and the horrors of the plague and other catastrophic illnesses that no one could understand or effectively treat. I'd recommend this title to adults more than to teenagers, except to teens with a special interest in medieval history.

I love stories that illustrate as well as this one does the depths, complexities, glory, strength, and even frailty of humanity. When the Plague hit the village of Eyam in 1665 the residents made the ultimate sacrifice of quarantining themselves in order to protect outlying towns and villages from sharing their fate. Once the story began to unfold, I couldn't put the book down. Though the crisis certainly created panic and gave opportunity for human weakness to play out (ie. selfishness, blame, etc...), more than anything people truly rose to the occasion and demonstrated incredible strength of character and honor. Never have I read an account of The Plague told in such a personal manner--it gave me a much better understanding of what it was really like as well as a sense of awe towards those who survived it after living through such terror and loss. I am left with a sense of "being there". Though told through the perspective of a fictitious character, the events and main characters in the book are taken from the real history of the village of Eyam in Derbyshire. If you search online you will see photos of places, buildings, and other landmarks in the town. After reading this book, you will want to dig deeper.

I am intrigued by books about the plague. The attraction? Well, even one of my crappiest, exhaustion-filled day pales in comparison to living through the plague. Or maybe it's those gore filled plague sores that call to me (but I'd never truly admit that). This book is a bit different than the few that I've read about the plague of the 1600's in that it isn't scholarly, dry or written from the point of view of adults. This fictional tale is told by a young lady named Mal who describes her world with beauty and sensitivity. Initially, the writing style was a bit of a chore and a little difficult to get into. But stick with it, the journey is well worth the work. Once I adjusted myself to the rhythm of the writer and the different language choices (than I'm used to) I fell completely into Mall's world of hard work and young love amidst the threat of unbelievable horror when the Bubonic Plague arrives. I'm a hard-hearted reader, having read far more than my share of overly sentimental stuff, but this book brought me to tears too many times to count from the sheer strength of this young girl. It makes me all teary just to think about these people. This is a book that should be required reading in schools (if it isn't already).

A Parcel of Patterns is a medieval history/historical fiction type of book. It is about a teenage girl about the age of 16, named Mall Percival, who sadly watches her whole town die out. The setting is in the 17th century, Derbyshire village in Eyam in England. Mall is the Narrator of the story. The plot was basically about a parcel of patterns that was sent to the parson's wife, or the town tailor, that contained a fatal disease that spread throughout the entire town slowly killing it off. The book was theatrical, very down-to-earth. But on the contrary, I thought it was not easy to read, an obstacle to get through, because it used Old English which in some cases is not easily understood. It tended to be over-detailed in thought occasionally. Finally, the plot seemed to drag on until the end where it was picked up and the story came together for the most part.

I think some that some of the people who wrote reviews didn't understand that this book is based on true life. The author makes fictitious people the central story, but the facts she described really did happen. When the plague came to Eyam, they decided to shut themselves off and die there, rather than spread it around their families and friends in the surrounding countryside. Eyam in Derbyshire is still there, with people living in the houses described in the book. Visitors can see plaques on the wall giving the names of the people who lived and died there, and would be able to recognise some names that are in the book. If you think of the story told as being a description of incredible bravery, as it was, the book would never seem to be boring or slow.

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