

A WISHING SHELF BOOK REVIEW

18th September, 2019

TITLE: Daddy Long Legs

AUTHOR: Jean Webster

Abridged by Fiza Pathan and Michaelangelo Zane
Illustrated by Farzana Cooper

Star Rating: 4

CATCHY QUOTE

'A well-written and very accessible abridgment of the classic Daddy Long Legs. Perfect for introducing this text to 7 to 12 year olds.' The Wishing Shelf

REVIEW

I'm not going to comment too much on the story only to say it was originally written by Jean Webster and is very much a coming-of-age tale of a girl's life at college and the letters she sends to her benefactor, a person she has never met. It is very much a joyful story, as Judy tells the 'tall, thin man' - which is why she calls him Daddy Long Legs - all about her fun, exciting life.

Although I am a big fan of the book, I do think the message is a little dated. I think the author honestly thinks that an orphan can be put in a new 'rich' environment and all his/her problems will simply fly away. Sadly, it's not like that; the mental scars suffered by children can stay with them for a long time, if not forever. But, let's not dwell on that. There's so much 'goodness' in this story, I think children today will get a lot from it. And I'm delighted that authors like Fiza Pathan and Michaelangelo Zane are producing abridgments of these classics.

All in all, this is a very good attempt. The authors work hard to keep the original message and much of the plot, whilst simplifying a text originally published in 1912. If you didn't know, the whole text is in the form of letters. Yes, letters! I wonder if, today, children even know what a 'proper' letter is. But it will do them good to show them!

I could see the abridgment working very well as a class reader in a primary school. The pacing is excellent and this abridgment has left in all the good stuff, so there's much for children to discuss. Also, there are a number of

black and white drawings which do add to the text and, I think, will help children to stay focused on the story.

I would happily recommend this book to any school library or parent looking to introduce a child to the classic text without overwhelming them with the flowery text of the original.

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