



***Each Kindness***

Written by Jacqueline Woodson

Illustrated by E.B. Lewis

Penguin, 2012, 32 pp

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Jaqueline Woodson tells a story of what it is like to be a new student at school and not have friends because you look, act, and live differently than your classmates. Maya is a new girl at a school in the U.S. who is not liked by her classmates. She wears hand-me-down clothes and plays with old toys such as jacks and jump ropes. Chloe, the narrator of the story, along with the other students in the class, never give Maya a chance because she is different from them. Each day Maya comes to school and tries to

make friends, but her classmates ignore her, not even making eye contact. As the story continues Chloe begins to question her decision to treat Maya as an outcast.

Then one day Maya does not come to school. The teacher discusses kindness with the class and performs a demonstration with a pebble and a bowl of water. As she drops the pebble into the water, she points out the ripples and connects those to kindness. One small act of kindness will continue to spread just like the ripples in the water. At this point Chloe's guilt and regret with how Maya has been treated become clear. Chloe decides that when Maya returns, she will be kind and reach out to her. But day after day Maya's seat remains empty. Then one day the teacher informs the class that Maya will not be coming back because her family moved away. Chloe is filled with regret and sadness about the kindness she had not shown and thinks of all the things she wishes she had said to Maya. The watercolor illustrations are magnificently done by E.B. Lewis and fill each page of the book. Lewis uses muted colors and large brush strokes to create life-like works of art on each page of the story.

This story provides a lesson to children about bullying, friendship, acceptance, and kindness. Woodson wrote the story with realistic interactions between Maya and Chloe to which students can relate. Students also see themselves in the story due to the diverse children Lewis depicts in the beautiful illustrations.

Teachers would be able to teach several different lessons using this story, including accepting differences, kindness, and acceptance. Other books on kindness and acceptance that pair well with *Each Kindness* are *The Day You Begin* (Jacqueline Woodson & Rafael López, 2018) and *The Invisible Boy* (Trudy Ludwig & Patrice Barton, 2013).

Jaqueline Woodson was born on February 12, 1963, in Columbus Ohio. Her youth was split between South Carolina and Brooklyn. She writes in a style that explores

boundaries—social, economic, physical, sexual, and racial. She has won many awards for her works throughout the years including a Coretta Scott King, Newbery Honor, and a Langston Hughes medal. She is also the recipient of the international Hans Christian Andersen and Astrid Lindgren awards.

E.B. Lewis showed artistic talent even as a young child. His preferred medium is watercolor, and he has illustrated over 70 books. His works have won numerous awards, including the Orbis Pictus Award, Coretta Scott King, and Caldecott Honor. Lewis currently lives in New Jersey.

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