



The Hope Chest

Karen Schwabach

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A perfect Common Core tie-in, *The Hope Chest* includes nonfiction backmatter with period photographs, historical notes about the suffrage movement, and a Voting in America timeline. It's also a New York State Curriculum title for fourth grade.

Eleven-year-old Violet has one goal in mind when she runs away from home: to find her sister, Chloe. Violet's parents said Chloe had turned into the Wrong Sort of Person, but Violet knew better. The only problem is that Chloe's not in New York anymore. She's moved on to Tennessee where she's fighting for the right of women to vote. As Violet's journey grows longer, her single-minded pursuit of reuniting with her sister changes. Before long she is standing side-by-side with her new friends—suffragists, socialists, and colored people—the type of people whom her parents would not approve. But if Violet's becoming the Wrong Sort of Person, why does it feel just right? This stirring depiction of the very end of the women's suffrage battle in America is sure to please readers who like their historical fiction fast-paced and action-packed. *American Girls* fans will fall hard for Violet and her less-than-proper friends.

The Hope Chest Details

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Author : Karen Schwabach

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From Reader Review The Hope Chest for online ebook

Emily basulto canada says

Oh my geez I love this book its amazing it shows how friendship is better than race , why did we even start to be races it doesn't matter this book gives ALL women to have the equal rights men have this reminds me how boys think that there better than girls guess what there not girls are strong we can play sports this story is so inspiring I love it and I hope u do too . ???.

Susanna says

My fourth grade class read this book as we studied women's suffrage.. I did some research after I finished and it does well at mixing historical events and people with the fictional story and characters. Violet is quiet and sees herself as a follower but she is brave and strong throughout the book, the perfect character for a story about women's suffrage and the vote in Tennessee.

Reading Vacation says

The Hope Chest explores the women's suffrage movement in a new way. The story is told mostly by Violet, but it also includes her sister Chloe and their new friend Myrtle. Each character joins the movement for their own reasons and grows because of it.

Chloe has left her family because her parents were trying to force her into a marriage that she did not want. Instead of buying a hope chest for her marriage, she buys a car and names it The Hope Chest. Chloe has gone to college, is smart, and she knows what she wants. She learns what true love is when she meets the right guy.

Violet is the little sister who wants to be with her big sister. Little does she know, but doing this will put her directly into the middle of the suffrage violence. She becomes very active in the movement and even pretends to be against suffrage so she can spy on the enemy. Violet learns that she is independent and strong. Finally, there is Myrtle. She is the young black girl who joins the sisters on their adventure. It is sad to see how Myrtle is treated by many of the whites just because of her skin color. Looking to leave the South, she bravely makes the move to Alaska with Chloe as the story comes to an end.

I liked how the story was told and the way the girls related to each other.

Gabrielle S says

I wanted to like this and it wasn't bad but it was a little too clear cut. Sort of like it had been written for school children to read about women's suffrage. You can write accurate historical fiction without making it quite so dry.

Emiliann says

Being the Marvel trash that I am, I can't help but start off this review with some good old fashioned Marvel comparisons-and more specifically, comparing "The Hope Chest" to *Avengers: Age of Ultron*.

Myself personally, I loved *Age of Ultron*. For those unversed in the MCU, *AoU* is the sequel to the smash hit *The Avengers*. Anyway, despite my own personal semi-secret adoration of Ultron as a film, many fans were left feeling disappointed, confused, displeased, or even rage-y upon seeing it. The premise is great to most, of course-the Avengers back again to kick butt, and this time, mechanical robot butt. But it was the execution, the little infuriating details-cough BRUCENAT cough-that set off most fans.

I had a similar reaction to "The Hope Chest". The premise, like *Age of Ultron*, is great: a young (albeit awesomely rebellious) kid getting caught up in the days leading up to women earning the right to vote throughout America. Women's suffrage! A historical setting! Eventual race relations! A feisty female protagonist! Great, right?

WRONG!

I hated "The Hope Chest." HATED it. I hated the clunky historical facts. While in the author's previous work, "The Pickpocket's Tale", the fact were seamlessly weaved into the story, the facts in "The Hope Chest" were thrown into the story with a feeble, at best, attempt to tie them into the prose. I hated Violet, the MC. I was expecting a feisty heroine, and instead got an insufferable, rude little brat. I hated the extreme bias from the author, especially when it came to women's rights in general. I hated how she painted all the Anti's as being stupid women haters, and the married with children women as either clueless, pitiful, judgmental, etc. I get that unfortunately, most women in that era didn't have many other options then child rearing and marriage, but regardless. It gave off a vibe that was honestly rather anti-feminist.

Perhaps the worst thing about the book, the thing which earned it a one star rating, was the blatant leftism throughout. Actually, scratch that-it was the blatant SOCIALISM PROPAGANDA. In a book marketed to CHILDREN. I don't have a problem with the author's personal political views, and frankly I don't care. But sneaking it into children's books, and not even attempting to be subtle about it? I'm sorry, but politics of any sort-right wing, left wing, communism, whatever-has no place in children's books.

Honestly? Do yourself a favor and read "A Pickpocket's Tale", the author's other (far better) work.

Overall? A solid single star.

Did I mention how much I hated this book?

Melissa says

This is a book I should have loved--women's suffrage! strong women! 1920!

It's the story of a young girl who follows her sister--who just happens to be a suffragist in Tennessee, trying to make sure that this last, crucial state ratifies the 19th amendment.

And yet, it was heavy handed beyond belief. Way too many "lucky breaks" The cast of famous historical characters was like a parade.

And every kind of viewpoint was presented in one tidy character. And I could never suspend my disbelief that an 11 year old could travel cross country.

This book probably also suffers since I just finished Green Glass Sea, which presents complex history with amazing subtlety in a completely natural, kid-friendly way. This is not the book to get kids fascinated with women's suffrage.

Alex Z says

A well put together overview, in fiction form, of what life was like for American women in 1919, with engaging characters and a plot that, although somewhat far-fetched in places, is still quite exciting.

Bill Prosser says

Excited for the subject matter, disappointed by the "history" book feel to this one. The political agenda is not very well hidden either.

Abbey Jenkins says

The Hope Chest is an inspiring book for young ladies to read. Violet Mayhew is a young girl who left home in search of her sister Chloe. Chloe is in a suffrage league for the women's vote. Violet's parents did not support this cause, so Chloe left home and went to New York. Violet was left at home with her parents and older brother who was dealing with shell-shock. Violet finds out that her parents had been hiding letters from her sister that were written to her. Violet sets off to find her sister and is then gets tangled up in the suffrage movement. She gets to see both the suffrage side and the anti-suffrage side from the inside. On the way to find her sister, she encounters a man named Mr. Martin who seems to be running from the law and a "colored" girl named Myrtle. This book discusses the bribing that goes on and the process for a law to get passed. Violet learned so much on her journey that will change her life forever. I really enjoyed this book because it discussed history, but it had a great story line. At times, the plot was a little slow, but overall, I really enjoyed it! This would be great for 9-12 year old students, specifically girls. I think this can help students understand the process of what happens in Congress.

Elisabeth says

Engaging and Educational

I bought this ebook because I wanted to get ahead of my kids reading it (it's in our curriculum). Sadly, we didn't get to finish it this year. However, that was mostly because my kids had so many questions and comments. The story was both high interest and relatable for my students (despite taking place almost 100 years ago). They were shocked and outraged by past US policies and laws regarding women and minority rights (both of which the author covered brilliantly and age-appropriately). This led to so many great conversations! I cannot wait to use this story again next year and will make a point of giving us extra time to finish before summer break!

Hailey says

I love this book! It really inspires young girls that you can make a difference in the world, and that girls can do anything boys can. It is about Violet who is 11, and she wants to find her older sister Chloe. Chloe ran out when her mother and father said she had to get married, but instead of a hope chest she bought a car. If Violet is hanging with the wrong people why does she feel so right. Along the way Violet meets many new characters who make her life all turned around, and Find Out What Happens Next!!!!

Izzy😘😇😚 says

I am sorry but this book was boring

Emily G says

This was prep for part of my 4th grade's ELA this year, but I read it so it counts on Goodreads too, right?

Karla says

CCBC recommended this book or I probably wouldn't have read it based on the cover *blush*. I think a lot of kids will skip this one when they see the cover art. But it is well written and surprisingly full of action for being a historical novel about women's suffrage featuring two little girls. A surprising number of issues are touched on within the historical context. I would have liked to have an epilogue to know what happens to Violet when she returns home after running away, but that is only hinted at. Maybe a sequel?

Libby says

As a fourth grade teacher I came across this book as part of our Common Core based curriculum. My students enjoy the pace, action, and characters in the book. What I love the most is that this historical fiction novel is so well written that it both challenges and keeps my students interested. My favorite part of teaching this novel is the organic and rich discussions that stem from the book themes/topics including: gender norms, race, discrimination, equality, legality of actions if it is what you believe, and injustice.
