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# The Stranger



## Synopsis

The enigmatic origins of the stranger that Farmer Bailey hits with his truck and brings home to recuperate seem to have a mysterious relation to the weather. Could he be Jack Frost?

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 640L (What's this?)

Hardcover: 32 pages

Publisher: HMH Books for Young Readers; First Edition edition (October 28, 1986)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0395423317

ISBN-13: 978-0395423318

Product Dimensions: 0.5 x 11 x 9.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.1 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (85 customer reviews)

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Age Range: 4 - 7 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 3

## Customer Reviews

Teachers - this is a wonderful book for a read aloud. I read this book to a class of second graders and they were completely entranced by the illustrations and by the stranger in the story. The book is wonderfully illustrated and is great to read during the fall season to the students. Also, because the stranger's identity remains a mystery this book is a wonderful lead into a writing activity. Read it. You'll love it!

Other reviewers have used the word "strange" to describe this work. I think the words "haunting" and "mysterious," probably hit closer to the mark. At least they do for me. This is one of those works that will certainly make you think. More importantly, it will make, or should make, the young reader think. That is the key to the fascination of the text of this work. Beyond doubt, the illustrations are quite wonderful, even beautiful. I did note that some of the youth reviews here were not overly enthusiastic. I have found that many young people do indeed "get" the story, while others do not. Some simply do not have the capacity to wonder, to imagine. This is sort of sad in a way, but on the

other hand, it is works such as this, that if read with an adult who does have that spark of wonder in them, might allow some of that wonder to rub off. I like a good fantasy and a good mystery, ergo, I liked this book and do recommend it. The art work and stark writing alone are worth it.

Chris van Allsburg's "The Stranger" is, well, a very interesting read. I have to admit to NOT liking it the first couple of times I read it to my kids, partly because the stranger in question remains a stranger throughout the book. Van Allsburg gives us no easy answers here. Still, this makes the book an excellent jumping-off place for questions about who we are, what makes a group of people a family or a community, and how well we really all know each other. The illustrations are, as usual, stellar van Allsburg stuff. The cover portrait especially, of the stranger being served soup by Farmer Bailey's wife, is very nearly hypnotic. The stranger's face is suffused with a mixture of fear and wonderment, and you find yourself thinking, "Is it the soup that fascinates him? The tureen across the table? The farmer's wife?" It really gets you thinking.

some criticize the tale because it leaves much open to speculation/imagination; that is part of the appeal of this Van Allsburg work; I had to read it 2 or 3 times before I figured out the ID of the stranger; then I wanted to read it again to see all the clues I had missed; it is so clever; I agree that it is not a book for small children, but not because of adult themes or unrealistic elements (driver hitting pedestrian, no injury to pedestrian, driver not punished for crime, stranger going home to family, risk of child abuse when stranger alone w/daughter, etc); it is not a book for small children because they would not understand the complexity of the symbolism; about a 1st grader would understand it for sure; beyond that, any age can enjoy; I can see how teachers like to read it w/classes to spur thinking & discussion

What is the connection between the stranger who does not talk and the farmer and his family? Watch for the subtle clues. My students always listen (and watch) intently when I have them watch for clues. Who is the stranger? Fun book for children. Well illustrated.

"Farmer Bailey could not help noticing how peculiar the weather had been. Not long ago it seemed that autumn was just around the corner. But now it still felt like summer, as if the seasons couldn't change. The warm days made the pumpkins grow larger than ever. The leaves on the trees were as green as they'd been three weeks before." I can't help noticing, either. The calendar says fall but summer goes on and on; ninety degree days, sweltering humidity, afternoon thunderstorms. The

celestial clock that governs these things seems to have stopped. I have loved Van Allsburg's *The Stranger* since I first read it to my own children years ago. The illustrations are just as thrilling and mysterious to me now as they were then. When the stranger gently blows across a spoonful of soup, Mrs. Bailey shivers. I do too.

My kids, 7yos, were totally captivated by the pictures and kept asking questions throughout the story. They couldn't guess the ending or figure it all out until the end, and still at the end it kept them thinking! We read this after *The Fig* story by the same author that they just adore! Beautiful pictures.

This is a great book. The illustrations are really creative. there is a lot of expressions for the characters. The stranger is a very strange man. A lot of things happen to make the stranger seem not human. The author of creative words are used to explain how people are acting and what people are doing. The people in the story have very different personalities through out the story. There are many different mood for every character for every part of the story. The stranger loves the family he meets very much. In this story he uses clues and mystery words to help you figure out who he is. He starts out his storys with pictures and clues to write his storys. He writes many different books. I really enjoyed this book so I hope many other people will get to read it and enjoy it too.

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