



Moving Miss Peggy: A Story of Dementia, Courage and Consolation

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The story of a family helping their mother to face dementia and learning to love each other again in the process.

"I am not ever going to get to go home, am I?," she said one day. This is the story of moving Miss Peggy to a new place to live, to a new way of life, to a new kind of reality. All of which became necessary because Miss Peggy had begun to live a life colored by dementia. All of us who love her have begun to live that new life with her. Some of that story is here as well.

In Moving Miss Peggy, we also meet the story of siblings, grown apart over years, with nothing in common except for a mother who in wrestling through her own challenges gave each grown child the gift of a deeply felt reunion, long years after any of them suspected there was a possibility of reconciling grace.

Written with grace, candor and bittersweet humor, Moving Miss Peggy tells a story that many others are now facing, bringing strength and wisdom and inspiration to readers. We learn (and learn again) along with Miss Peggy and her family some of the very basics for living life well.

Moving Miss Peggy: A Story of Dementia, Courage and Consolation Details

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From Reader Review Moving Miss Peggy: A Story of Dementia, Courage and Consolation for online ebook

Diane Sugars says

Ok well, this book was a very quick read and it really did not go anywhere. It felt more like a jumble of words rather than a story about Miss Peggy. I felt like this book was just quickly written and was nothing like the synopsis alluded to.

Elizabeth says

This is an important book by a friend; it is also a pleasure to read.

Robert Benson's mother suffers from dementia and this book is an account how he and his siblings dealt with it. It is, like many of these memoirs, touching, but it is also informative.

It should serve as a reminder that you may one day be responsible for a person who is unable to make decisions for him or herself (a parent, a spouse, someone else?) You may be that person.

Fortunately for the Benson family, they saw Miss Peggy's decline while she was still able to make some decisions for herself...to fill out all the paperwork and have discussions. That is not always the case.

Think about it...if you make decisions now that never need to be acted upon, no harm done. If you wait, it may be too late.

But this isn't a how-to book...it's a story of a family who loves Miss Peggy.

Kerri says

5 Stars. Not because of the stunning prose (although it is well-written).

5 Stars. Because it is my story too.

Read this if you have an aging parent. Read this if you ever plan to age. Like Benson, my brother and I moved my mom when the diagnosis of dementia came. Like Benson, we had missed the signs because our mom was loved by all, strong, independent and "just getting older."

It isn't wasn't easy work. Nor is it an easy book to read. But it is work we will all face and I hope I did my part with grace. I know my brother did.

If you wonder if someone you love may be dealing with the beginnings of memory loss, read this book along with the 36-Hour (as Benson references, too).

Nancy says

Having moved my mother too in times past, this memoir was personal and nostalgic, even though this was Robert Benson's story. Rethinking our history with his as a guide helped me find some gentler moments to recall. I plan to share this with families beginning this part of their family journey. It is not clinical; it is not a how-to book; it is a loving reminder that this too is a part of our story and should be carried out with love and dignity and a little bit of humor.

Lizzytish says

A sweet, gentle telling of the author's experience of having to put his Mom in assisted living. I picked this up as I work in an assisted living place and I've experienced this within my family. It is not a how to book nor is it really a memoir. I wish I could have had more intimate glimpses into knowing Miss Peggy. I feel like I didn't really get to know her through this story. The author's love for his Mom is evident and sweet as is his love for his family.

Michael says

Reading this just broke my heart and made me cry. Deserving of 5 stars for the lucid prose and insights and most importantly, the humanity, grace and love the author has for Miss Peggy.

Elizabeth says

A simply and beautifully told true story of taking care of a beloved mother as she descends into the world of dementia. I swallowed it up in a few hours! For anyone attempting to navigate this often scary and terribly difficult journey, this book shares one family's attempt to care for their loved one with grace and dignity, while treating one another in the same manner. I so appreciated this book!!! Thank you, Robert Benson!

Connie says

Benson is a sensitive and poetic writer about life in all its complexities. Here, he describes his family's experience in moving Miss Peggy-- his mother-- into assisted living as her dementia began to limit her ability to cope on her own. While he does not gloss over the difficulties, he also writes with great love and respect for his mother, his siblings, and their extended family. While there is an element of sadness, of course, there is also affirmation of the power of love and of joy to be found in the journey, sometimes in the most unexpected places. The book itself doesn't take long to read, but leaves you wishing that you knew Miss Peggy and her caring and compassionate family, too.

Ann says

"Miss Peggy," as she is known to many, is the author's mom, and this book is his loving portrait of her before and after dementia invaded her active and fulfilling life. Benson and his sister and two brothers know Miss Peggy cannot continue to live alone in her townhouse. She needs to be in assisted living, but the first hurdle is how (gently) to persuade her to give up driving — a devastating loss in itself, as her children fully recognize. In time Miss Peggy loses all her independence and eventually even the memory of that independence. Told with honesty, poignancy and elegant simplicity, Miss Peggy's story will resonate with anyone dealing with dementia in a loved one. It is not a how-to book, but it is an insightful glimpse of what lies ahead for a family in similar circumstances. The steps the Benson siblings take to ensure Miss Peggy's comfort, safety, and peace of mind and to allow her the few choices she can still handle, in addition to their management of her legal and financial affairs, provide a general framework for reference, and further resources are suggested in the notes and acknowledgments. What struck me most was the empathy, wisdom, and generous spirit with which this family embraced their mother in helping her transition into a new home and way of life. May I be so lucky, if it should ever happen to me.

Kellie Reynolds says

Intimate story of a family that moves their mom to assisted living because of her dementia. The author provides information about earlier years- the early years of his parents' marriage, family trips, more recent interactions when it became clear his mom could no longer care for herself. Each sibling and other family members play a unique role the care of Miss Peggy.

The book is a quick read and tells an important story about family interactions through good times and bad.

Paul Lunger says

Robert Benson's "Moving Miss Peggy: A Story of Dementia, Courage, and Consolation" is a biography of his mother Peggy as the family & she herself deals with the effects of dementia. Benson's story is told in a quick & easy way that brings to light the challenges that families face when dealing with loved ones who face this disorder & also the challenges she herself fought as she slowly lost control of herself. It's also done in a way to respect his mother's wishes as she wanted this story to be told. We all someday could know someone like Miss Peggy & by reading a little piece of her story makes us all a better person for it.

Leisl says

I read this little book early this past Sunday morning. The copy of it was acquired on Saturday afternoon at ALA 2013. Mr. Benson was there in person to sign copies of it. I had never read any of his works before.

This is a very well-written and poignant story. It is written in the third person for the most part. It is not written from the point of view of the author, although he is obviously a character in the story. Sometimes it is

addressed as "we" (the four siblings who must decide what to do with their mother), and then each sibling or spouse is named when necessary.

Miss Peggy, as she is most often called, married young and gave birth to five children over the next 16 years. After her husband passed away fairly young (their youngest child was still just 16 years old), she led a rather independent life working and enjoying living. However, in the last couple of years, some things haven't been quite right with her, and her living children gather to decide what must be done for her, and who will do what things for Miss Peggy.

She is experiencing dementia, and it is getting worse. She is not quite the self she used to be. She has already had to give up driving. It is finally decided that she must be moved into an assisted living facility, and her large townhouse must be sold. The siblings set out to find just the perfect location for their mother. In the meantime, they are trying to carefully dissolve their mother's household and belongings.

It is a beautiful story, and it really resonated with me. I have experienced some of these things recently with my grandpa recently moving into assisted living. I inherited some very special furniture. . . and this past Sunday, my grandpa was able to share again the story of how he and grandma acquired that furniture more than sixty years ago

S.L. Berry says

Moving Miss Peggy is a "let's get comfortable talking about the subject." It is touchy feely and for that I am glad it was my first book on how to approach dealing with a loved one that has dementia. That is as far as Benson goes as other reviews have noted.

David says

Brief (159 double-spaced, small pages) recap of the experiences of author and his siblings with their mother's aging and (especially) dementia. Describes with gentle humor some of the difficulties that arise (p. 53 "Somewhere there is an older parent who just called their children to say 'I think I would like to give up my car and the independence that goes with it. Would you come and pick the car up, please?' But I suspect such conversations do not happen very often")

I think the sweet spot for the book may be as a fairly nonthreatening intro to the topic for people with aging parents who have not had any friends go through this, haven't read much about it, etc. It's not nearly detailed enough to serve as a guidebook (p. 104 "We are not professional health care folks, so it would be unwise to pretend we could explain the differences between independent living and assisted living and nursing home care and on and on.") but also not actually very intimate or personal as a family memoir. For a guy who teaches workshops on "writing and the contemplative life" per the author bio on the book jacket, some of it was surprisingly superficial/impersonal -- of my siblings, this one was good at arranging the move, that one was our unanimous choice for talking to her about the need to move, and the other one was good at keeping track of friends/family visiting schedules.....the sort of observations that are interesting to chew over if you are one of the siblings, but not really otherwise.

Having been through a similar experience, I did not learn a great deal from the book but did feel for the

author. He clearly loves his Mom, and he comes across as an exceptionally nice person.

Debby Janda says

With great sadness, I remember my Mom slipping away from us like Miss Peggy, but Mom's descent was so accelerated and lasted so painfully long - twelve years.
