



## The Desert Is Theirs

*Byrd Baylor , Peter Parnall (Illustrator)*

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You may think of the desert as a harsh, dry place where no one would ever want to live -- but think again.

The Desert People know. so do the animals. Both love the land, and "share the feeling of being brothers in the desert, of being desert creatures together."

Byrd Baylor's spare, poetic text and Peter Parnall's striking illustrations lime the sky, stone and sand of the desert in this haunting book.

## **The Desert Is Theirs Details**

Date : Published April 30th 1987 by Aladdin (first published 1975)

ISBN : 9780689711053

Author : Byrd Baylor , Peter Parnall (Illustrator)

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## From Reader Review The Desert Is Theirs for online ebook

### Christy says

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### Patty says

Reading Level: Primary

This book could be used when teaching a desert unit. The pictures show the starkness that is associated with the desert. The minimal use of words help to give the idea of a desert being barren. The poetic form also helps with this.

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### Gabriella Bumbaca says

Genre: Informational Non-Fiction

Grade Range: 2-3

Review:

If I was teaching a lesson about different climates, this would definitely be a book I would use. It gave details about the desert and even what types of things live in the desert, so the students can learn a lot from it.

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### Maria Rowe says

#### • 1976 Caldecott Honor Book •

This book just screams 1970s. I thought it was fun to read. I didn't immediately like the illustrations but by the end of the book, I loved them. The text was good, but I wasn't terribly moved since it's so quiet and peaceful.

*Materials used: unlisted*

*Typeface used: unlisted*

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### Shayla Miller says

Use this to integrate a Native American perspective into a Science unit on biomes of the world. Ask students to create a visual representation of biome along with a letter from a Native American in this region to another Native American from the grasslands. This way, you can cover two important 4th grade themes and two academic subjects all in one!

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### **Paul says**

"Theirs" in the title refers to Southwestern Papagos or Desert People as they are called throughout the book. The verse captures the Desert People's respect for, view and value of the desert. After having been in the desert for several weeks, I get the attachment to its wildness. The book has a very similar visual style to *The Way to Start a Day*, doing a good job in this case of depicting in an impressionistic way the shapes, colors and life of desert. The verse that embodies a native-religion cosmology.

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### **Kelly says**

This was a Caldecott Honor book. I don't see why. I didn't like it at all. Way to wordy for a picture book. It would have been better off classified as a poetry book.

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### **Luann says**

In contrast to Parnall's illustrations from *Hawk, I'm Your Brother*, this one has color! Even then, I wouldn't point to most of these illustrations as favorites. Parnall is making a point about the desert by using a very simple color palette. I guess I just don't see the desert that way.

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### **Carmen Hartono says**

The wisdom of the Papago Indians comes alive in this poetic Caldecott honored book. The reader will learn to appreciate the sacredness of life and develop the virtues of sharing, patience, and much more.

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### **CreateEveryday Classroom says**

I recommend any book by this author for child or adult  
Always a breath of fresh air and such an inspiration

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### **Rachel says**

Once again, Byrd Baylor and Peter Parnall have hit a home-run with this book! Using Parnall's simplistic but

gorgeous illustrations, Byrd Baylor weaves an expressive story, told in poetical form, about the Pagagos (called the Desert People throughout the book) and the way in which they interact and work with the local flora and fauna of the desert. Each respects the desert and knows their role. As the author still lives in the Arizona desert near the Mexico border, she knows what she is talking about and has probably observed the animals and plants that she discusses in the book. My only complaint is that it was a little too long. This book won a 1976 Caldecott Honor, and rightly so. Recommended for ages 5-10, 4 stars.

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### **Matthew says**

She writes so powerfully about a subject that is often neglected, the southwestern desert and its inhabitants. The illustrations are certainly different than what people would expect today, but they're beautiful. I mean, after all, they did receive Caldecott Honors.

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### **Judy says**

Rating: 3.5

This harkens back to the days of the hippies, flower children, and rainbow family when there was an underlying current that we should all be living closer to the land and that we all have responsibility for the condition of the Earth. I like the message, so I appreciate BB's books. This isn't a story that all kids will love. It's a book to take off the shelf only when the time "feels right."

*Papagos try  
not to anger  
their animal brothers*

...  
*They know  
the land belongs  
to spider and ant  
the same as it does  
to people.*

*They never say,  
"This is my land  
to do with as I please."  
They say,  
"We share . . .  
we only share."*

*And they do share.*

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### **Laura says**

I did not care for this book. I thought that the format of the words was pretty cool, even poetic, but the words themselves did not do anything for me. The illustrations were nice, but nothing astounding. I'd pass this book by.

\*Taken from my book reviews blog: <http://reviewsatmse.blogspot.com/2008...>

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### **SamZ says**

1976 Caldecott Honor: favorite illustration: the hawk floating in the wind.

This, like Baylor's previous Caldecott Honor, *When Clay Sings*, is a series of free verse poems depicting life of the Papagos people of the desert. I enjoyed reading the poetry that highlighted the harmony between the animals and people that inhabit the deserts of North America. I also really enjoyed the way Baylor highlights the fact that while the desert can be tough and unforgiving, it can also be beautiful and wonderful.

The illustrations, I felt, did an excellent job in matching the slow and gentle nature of the poetry, and highlighted the animals mentioned in various verses.

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### **Mitchell says**

A Caldecott Honor picture book about the Desert People of the southwest United States. Readable with good but understated art. This book tries to capture the feel and spirit of the desert. And likely succeeded, but I'm not one much for the desert. So for me it was a miss. But it was still good and more than a little lyrical.

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### **Robin says**

This is my favorite of Byrd Baylor's books that I have read. The words are lyrical. The thoughts are peaceful. The little story transports us to a calm, beautiful place where the noise of the world doesn't exist. It is perfect to read aloud.

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### **Robert Davis says**

A delightful discovery for me in this book, with vibrant illustrations and well formed verse. This is one of the better Caldecott Honored books I have seen. The pictures, mainly ink line drawings, are brought to life with exciting use of color. In fact, it is the colored illustrations that really bring excitement to this book. It is hard to pick a favorite picture because they are all done so magnificently. I will make a point of looking for more of Baylor & Parnall's collaborations, and I highly recommend that others do the same.

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## **Camila Padilla says**

The Desert is Theirs by Byrd Baylor

Have you ever wondered how life is in the desert? It may seem a dry place, where no one would ever want to live. But to the desert people and the desert animals “there is no place like home.” Both love and share the land, and both share the feeling of being desert creatures together. *The Desert Is Theirs* is a delightful book with vibrant illustrations that bring to life the many aspects of living in the desert, how it feels and what is like living in the desert from its inhabitants’ perspective. The poem narrates the respectful relationship between the native desert people and the animals, and the sacredness of the harsh environment to both.

The main theme of the story is being respectful towards other living beings, and caring and respecting nature.

*The Desert Is Theirs* would be a great read aloud to incorporate desert lesson plans in any grade level. For lower grades, the book can give a broad overview of the environment, and of the plants and animals that live in the desert. One interactive way to introduce the desert to young children is to allow children to glue sand to a piece of cardboard to create a desert scene. The students can draw on a separate sheet of paper the Papago Indians and the different plants and animals mentioned in the story, cut out the figures and use them to create the scene as they prefer. The idea is that the students understand how a desert looks and feels like, who lives in a desert, and how creatures interact within themselves and with the environment.

<http://www.123child.com/lessonplans/o...>

Since the book describes the lives of the Papago Indians, the book can also be introduced in higher grades during the American Indian Heritage Month. The teacher can conduct a read aloud and incorporate topics of ancient American civilizations. The teacher can also facilitate a research project on the Papago Indians to understand about their culture and ways of living in the desert. The book could also be used to introduce the topic of ecosystems. Students can describe the Native Americans dependence on the physical environment and natural resources. As an interactive idea, the students can create a diorama of the desert, and represent a scene from the book that narrates the interaction between to living beings, or between a living being and the environment.

<http://blog.richmond.edu/openwidelook...>

<http://teachersnetwork.org/teachnetla...>

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## **Alex Naujokas says**

This book is very good. I enjoy the fact that it presents a different geographic perspective than most kids are used to: the desert. I also like the fact that it presents a different culture: the Native American culture. It is important for children to learn about different ways of thinking involving cultures and different physical landscapes.

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