



# The Most Beautiful Place in the World

*Ann Cameron , Thomas B. Allen (Illustrator)*

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"Seven-year-old Juan lives in Guatemala, a place of stunning beauty and grim economic reality. Abandoned by his mother, Juan lives with his grandmother and shines shoes. He passionately wants to attend school, but fears Grandmother will say no. Finally gathering his courage, he is surprised when she not only agrees to send him to school but also chides him about the importance of standing up for himself. Juan tells this bittersweet story, which reads smoothly and powerfully on several levels, with warmth and dignity."--*Booklist*.

## The Most Beautiful Place in the World Details

Date : Published May 25th 1993 by Yearling (first published January 1st 1988)

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Author : Ann Cameron , Thomas B. Allen (Illustrator)

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# From Reader Review The Most Beautiful Place in the World for online ebook

## Getsemani Alvarez says

Belleza, sensibilidad y humanidad en muy pocas páginas. Muy recomendado para todas las edades, especialmente para docentes.

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## Javier Yáñez says

Juan, un niño que vive en el pueblo de San Pablo en Guatemala. Abandonado por sus padres y protegido por su Abuela.

Creo que antes eran frecuentes la historias de huérfanos, pero este no es el caso.

Esta es una historia nada de común para un libro del colegio: Juan está inmerso en una cruda situación familiar, pero el sufrimiento no es parte del relato, la historia es vivida y contada de la manera sencilla en que la ve un niño.

Va a ser interesante comentarla con mis hijos, el libro es para uno de ellos.

Definitivamente recomendable leerlo, cada uno lo apreciará a su manera.

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## Patve says

la pobreza de espíritu es la única a la cual deberíamos temer...

"cualquier lugar donde puedas llevar la cabeza en alto y sentirte orgulloso de lo que eres....ese es el lugar más bonito del mundo"

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## Marie Neuner says

Snapshot: Juan, a seven-year old Guatemalan boy is abandoned by his young mother; she lives nearby with a stepfather who has disowned the young boy. Juan lives with his grandmother and his uncles, but always questions their love and loyalty--after all, his own mother has rejected him and started a new family to which he does not belong. Eventually, Juan begins to feel valued as he starts working and earning money for his grandmother, but he longs to go to school and get an education. While working the streets shining shoes, he teaches himself to read. After time, he realizes how much his grandmother loves him and he works up the courage to ask her to enroll him in school. He discovers that his grandmother had the same dream for herself when she was a girl, but her parents would not allow her to attend school because they needed her to work. When they visit the schoolhouse, he impresses the first-grade teacher with his early math and reading skills and she vows to help him in his education.

“Hook”: Short, simple sentence structure good for beginning readers in English.

Challenges: The content is disheartening (poverty, child abandonment, love and family approval, trust), but the book also provides hope (love, family, education, self-esteem).

Student in mind: ESL 1 students, to gain confidence as readers in English

Conference notes: What is your most beautiful place in the world? Why do you think Juan's mother abandons him? Why does grandmother's family say she cannot go to school? Why is work more important than education at times? When is education more important? This book provides opportunities to discuss work as immediate financial gain and education as sustained financial stability, as well as the class-power dynamics among nations and world economies.

Level: Middle School ESL 1, students with special reading/language needs

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### **Lisa the Librarian says**

The story of a young boy being raised by his grandmother in a small Guatemalan village. I was expecting more detail about the "Most Beautiful Place in the World". I was hoping for more description of the beauty of the country.

Instead this is a simple story about a boy named Juan who was abandoned by his father at birth and later by his mother when her new husband didn't want the boy. While I am sure this happens in Guatemala as well as other places in the world, I am equally sure that overall parents in Guatemala are loving, attentive and protective of their children.

I just hope that this isn't construed by some as typical of the culture.

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### **Jessica says**

Important topic; dreadful book.

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### **Ellie says**

The Most Beautiful Place in the World by Ann Cameron (of the Stories Julian Tells series) is written for children ages 8-12. I discovered when looking for books for my students to read this summer. I not only found it an appropriate read for them, I was personally touched by Juan, a young Guatemalan boy abandoned by his father and then mother. His greatest dream is to go to school. To say more would give away the meaning of the story but I will say that I found the writing clean and clear and the characters well drawn. I loved this little book and recommend it for every fiction reader. Although it doesn't take long to read (it's 64 pages), the characters and especially Juan's struggles remain with you after you close the book.

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### **José Daniel Paucar Restrepo says**

Este es el primer libro que recuerdo haber leído de pequeño, con no más de 10 años, y a pesar de ser tan corto, el mensaje final es lo que me acompaña desde entonces, y lo guardo como uno de los mejores libros

que han pasado por mi vida. Aprendí, como nos dice el título del libro, cuál es el lugar más bonito del mundo.

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### **Rafosi says**

Abandono de la infancia, paternidad irresponsable, precarización económica, trabajo infantil, la abuela como refugio y protección, alfabetización, derecho a la educación, vida en el mundo rural, economía basada en la agricultura, el terruño (la patria), inocencia y desengaño, empoderamiento y proactividad, identidad. Buenísima.

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### **Viviana Bravo says**

After being abandoned by both parents, Juan ends up living with his grandmother in San Pedro, Guatemala. While there, he feels lost and unimportant until his grandmother begins taking him to work as a shoe shiner. But when he sees other children going to school, he gets the motivation to go too.

Although this book is for grades 3-5, it felt as if it could have been written for younger audiences. The simple syntax made it an easy read, but still touching in accordance to what Juan endured at such an early age.

Despite being a touching book, I felt that the moral ending didn't match Juan's story. Having been abandoned and then to have to work to earn his place seemed far off from the theme of how love can make a place beautiful. The grandmother's devotion was not realized early on and the book rarely talked about beautiful places. Perhaps if it was a longer story, it could have achieved this theme.

Bingeing Books

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### **Karen says**

Very good book. My kids saw life of another boy that is so different from their own. Love the ending of this book and what the grandmother says to Juan...krb 8/24/16

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### **Jennifer says**

I LOVED THIS BOOK.

Here is a secret Guatemala is my favorite country that I have been to. So when I found this book I knew I had to read it. The author has clearly been to Guatemala (spoiler alert she lives there from time to time) and her writing took me back to Guatemala. I loved this book and I am going to have to buy this book (I checked this copy out at the library) so I can have it in my personal library. LOVED this book and I am excited to place it on my favorites of 2018 shelf.

Full review will be posted on The Cubicle Escapee.

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### **Manuel says**

The Most Beautiful Place In The World is a Non-Fiction book written by Ann Cameron. Ann Cameron is a US university teacher and a writer of young people's literature, that spend many years in Guatemala and Central America, where she had a lot of adventurous experiences with the Mayan culture. This book is about one of those experiences with native inhabitants of a village in Guatemala. It is a short story easy to read, I read the ebook edition published on 2014, but the first edition was published in 1989. This book is showing us how kids abandoned by their parents live like. I chose this book because it's simple to read and it talks about challenges of young people from the region I come from.

This book is about Juan, a boy who lives in Guatemala with his grandmother because he was abandoned by his parents. Juan works as a shoeshine boy even though he is only 7. Juan works everyday to earn money and help his grandmother. But Juan dreams to go to school like other kids of his age, and have a normal life. His grandmother was very strict in terms of working as a shoe shiner and his responsibilities at home, but she still treated him with kindness and love. With this I think that the writer wanted to show us that is important to be responsible and that material things are not so important, as Juan said at the end of the book, "When you love somebody a whole lot and you know that person loves you, that's the most beautiful place in the world". I think this a good book for young people that are always complaining about their lives, their parents and their tasks that are aks to do at home. In my opinion, yes, I think the author achieved her purpose.

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### **Cindi says**

Our first read-aloud in a long time. This goes along with our Guatemala theme as it's about a little town in the mountains there.

This is a sad story about a little boy abandoned by father and then later, mother. But it is a story of triumph as he is motivated to teach himself to read and then gather the courage to ask his Grandmother if he can attend school. We also learned tidbits about the country and talked about what it would be like to be this boy. The pencil drawings are really very nice.

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### **Cristian Orozco says**

Tierna historia, sencilla pero conmovedora. El contar la realidad de muchos pueblos, familias disfuncionales y vivencias extremas a través de los ojos de un niño es efectiva.  
Recomendado 100% el libro.

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