



# The Keeping Room

*Anna Myers*

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**The Keeping Room** Anna Myers

**Revolutionary War novel with a difference**

When Colonel Joseph Kershaw leaves Camden, South Carolina, to lead the American rebels in their struggle against the British, he leaves his son Joey behind as the man of the house. But what can a 13-year-old do when General Cornwallis comes into town and makes the Kershaws' home his headquarters, and begins hanging American prisoners in the family garden? Joey is determined to get revenge#151;even if he has to risk everything.

## The Keeping Room Details

Date : Published July 19th 1999 by Puffin Books (first published September 1st 1997)

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Author : Anna Myers

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Genre : Historical, Historical Fiction, Young Adult, Childrens, Middle Grade, Military History, American Revolution, Academic, School

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# From Reader Review *The Keeping Room* for online ebook

## Victini says

This was a good book about a kid in the Revalutionary War. I felt sad at some points. The main character was interesting to me because he was a kid like me.

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## Shannon Clark says

Even though I only rated this book a 3 I can't wait to recommend it to my 5th graders-especially my boys who are all about some war. This story has a great message- putting yourself in another person's shoes. Empathy.

A simple read about the American Revolution and how one American boy started out hating the Redcoats and ended up, well let's just say he was a changed boy by the end. :)

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## Laura Verret says

From the author of *Captain's Command* comes a tale of bravery from the American War for Independence.

### The Story.

I'm the man of the house now that my father has left to fight in the war. But I don't feel like a man – I feel like a scared child. Why, even my sister Mary shows more courage and spirit in the face of danger than I do! But my father entrusted the safety of my family to me. As he commanded, I will stand tall in the face of the enemy.

But then, everything goes wrong. First comes the news that my father's regiment has been destroyed – ripped to pieces even while it waved a flag of surrender. And now the enemy is coming here, to our own home, Kershaw House! I must protect my family, but is it wiser to bristle and fight, or bide my time and wait to strike a blow for the Patriot cause?

### Discussion.

It doesn't matter whether a war story is for children or adults – they always fall into two categories. One is adventurous, breathing of the nobility of sacrifice, bursting with life and bravery, and culminating with the success of a hair-raising mission. The other is tired of the squalor, disillusioned with the bloody deaths and torture - realizing the futility of destruction.

More often than not, children's novels fall into the first category. However, there are some which fit into the second, and *The Keeping Room* is one of them. [Others are *Soldier's Heart*, *The Fighting Ground*, *How I Found the Strong*, etc.] I started *The Keeping Room* thinking it would be a delightful romp around Philadelphia or some such city, full of encounters with famous Patriots and blood-raising victories against the snobby Brits. Instead, it tells of a little boy, Joey, whose father is one of the leading citizens of the town,

and whose world is rocked to its very core when the British invade his city and establish themselves in the Kershaw home – even building gallows in the family garden upon which they punish offending patriot soldiers. Instead of sassing at blundering, incapable British officers, Joey finds an unlikely kindness in the British officer who controls their house and learns that it is indeed true that war has a way of pitting two good men against each other.

Joey definitely matures as a character. In the beginning he is scared – understandably so – and shrinks from the ugly realities of the war. But he tries to nerve himself – to steel himself with his father’s brave words and examples. When his father is captured and thrown in prison, Joey works to harden himself to the ugly sights and sounds of war. He chafes under the tyrannies of the British soldiers and comes to understand for himself the meaning and precious gift of liberty.

By the end of the story, Joey has learned many lessons – one of which being the importance of maintaining a good balance between respecting and appreciating the guidance of his parents while also not being dependent on them for protection and conviction. In a tragic twist, he also learns what horrible consequences can result from noble-sounding actions.

*The Keeping Room* wasn’t a satisfying story in the way we typically mean that adjective – Joey wins no glory, and accomplishes no heroic feat. But it is satisfying in the way that only stories which reflect grim reality can be. There is a certain amount of description regarding violent situations [war-time injuries, etc.]

The meanest of all soldiers taunts a Camden resident by making insinuating comments about the man’s sweetheart.

**Conclusion.** A good story, but not in the happy-romp sort of way. Good for very mature readers.

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## Mary Kincaid says

The Keeping Room

By Anna Myers

eISBN 978-0-8027-3532-4

Walker Books for Young Readers, 1997

This is a historical novel about the Revolutionary War, 1775-1783. A father must leave his family and fight the British. He leaves his wife and children with his thirteen-year-old boy Joey in charge.

Here is the opening paragraph:

“My father’s troops wait on their horses just outside our front door. I can hear the murmuring voices of the men and the snorts and pawings of their mounts, anxious to be down the road to meet the enemy.”

His father loses the battle and becomes a prisoner of the British. As commanding officers and other men in

charge of the troops rotate through their house, Joey must learn to come to terms with his emotions.

Joey becomes a prisoner of the British and learns empathy for the slaves that his father keeps. His experiences show him that he must question what he believes and what his father believes.

His desire to make his father proud leads him to a defiance that has tragic consequences. His final lesson in disciplining his spirit and controlling his own temper and reactions.

The setting is believable. The dialogue is realistic. The characters are well drawn. The story draws the reader in and takes you to the historical period.

I give this novel a 4.5 out of 5. It is an exceptional example of historical genre for the young reader.

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### **Miss Amanda says**

gr 4-6 134 pgs

American Revolution, Camden, S Carolina. 13 year old Joey wants to make his father proud. When his father Col Kershaw goes to fight the British, he tells Joey that he is leaving him in charge. When the patriots are defeated and the British take up residence in his home, Joey is determined to meet his father's expectations.

Great story

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### **Valerie McEnroe says**

This book did not interest me in the least. There are many Revolutionary War books that have a fully developed plot with drama and action. This is not one of them. This one has little substance. Joseph's dad has joined the Rebel army against the British. When Cornwallis reaches their town, he takes over their house and builds a gallows for Rebel prisoners. His dad has been taken prisoner and Cornwallis grants him permission to visit his dad. His family struggles through the British occupation, and Joseph has no choice but to grow up.

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### **Julia says**

OMG!!! Great ending, I can't believe the ending!!! If you want to know the ending... TOO BAD!!!!!! READ IT YOURSELF!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

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### **Jaime says**

This book has lots of information about the Revolutionary War. I enjoyed it. My 5th graders liked reading it too.

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### **Debra Merillat says**

3.5

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### **Max Willi says**

Thirteen-year-old Joey Kershaw has to endure the occupation of his hometown of Camden, South Carolina by British forces during the Revolutionary War. Worse, his family home is commandeered as Lord Cornwallis's headquarters and American prisoners are hung in its yard.

Myers's book is historically accurate. While the descriptions of the horrors of British occupation are somewhat toned down for her intended audience, she still is able to effectively communicate the trauma experienced by the Kershaw family.

The book did not keep me on edge, eager to turn each page. However, I believe young people will find it an intriguing look at the peril their predecessors faced in the formation of our nation.

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### **Erica says**

Read this because some of my 5th graders were reading it. I liked Five 4ths of July better but I think the students will still get a lot out of this historical fiction.

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### **Sandra Fahlender says**

GREAT READ for American History! Especially for a 6th Grade Boy who is a very picky reader. He wanted to read this book, was anxious to know what happens and we actually had conversations other than a response of this book was fine. It included subject matters on slavery, educating women and the importance of treating everyone as you would like to be treated. Highly enjoyed this book!

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### **Yoey says**

Overall, I thought this book was just not really interesting, by no means poorly written. The story was a little confusing at times and I just couldn't get an idea of it. In my opinion, Anna Myers did an okay job on the characterization, because the history of the family and their background didn't bring enough insight into their

lives before the British invaded. This book was more about the change in their lives rather than the past moments before the invasion, the changes were very quick, for example, when his father left, Joey had to step up in his father's position in the family. This was very hard for Joey, most of the book is about Joey's reaction to this invasion and having to be the leader and protector of his family. It was hard for me to relate to the setting of the story as both my parents are home and there is no foreign army invading Clifton, nor anyone being hung in my back yard. Even though I have almost no personal connection besides being a 13 year old named Joey, I would feel bad for Joey v.1 (the one in the book, not me) and his family that they had to go through this. This really gave me a good idea on how people acted and which members of the family did what. Back then, to "be a man" was radically different than what it means today. Nowadays, being a "man" consists of having a car, house, job, and an optional family. Back when Joey was around, in the Revolutionary War era, gender roles were very different, all women would be expected to do is clean and take care of the house and family. But, Joey was very supportive of gender equality (education for boys and girls). While I find his bravery and compassion admirable, I really don't know if I'm capable of standing up for my country against the enemy like he did.

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### **Luis says**

This book was a great read! I was definitely not expecting the ending. There are many core truths that are forgotten during times of wars. Anna Myers does a great job at letting us see things through Joey's eyes, who learns that not everyone was as evil as he initially thought. Furthermore, in Joey's efforts to prove to his father that he is a man, he comes to the conclusion that people are not always right. He experienced what it was like to live under the same conditions the slave Cato was in, as he was "limited" in his own home. Above all, *The Keeping Room* teaches us about the hardships that families during the American Revolution experience and the perseverance, character, and morality that came as a result of the war.

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### **Saneel Patel says**

If you like books set in historical times then this is a good book to read. The author Anna Myers wrote many award winning Novels including this one. *The Keeping Room* takes place in Camden, South Carolina and the whole book revolves in this place. The main character in the book is Joey Kershaw whom is 12 years old. The main setting is taken place in the keeping room in Joey's house. In the story his father is off to war and it is up to Joey to keep his family safe. Joey's favorite room was the keeping room where he loved to study. This place was where he kept his mind off the British who seized Joey's home. The British were Joey's enemies who took over his family's life. The rest of the book you will have to read to see what happens to Joey and his family.

There is so much to say about this book. I like how the author showed his imagination to show the readers the informative details in the book. I liked how they told in the book that Joey hated a British after what they did to his family and friends in the community. Joey then realized that all British people are not mean and some were nice. This judgement happens everywhere throughout the world and teaches us that in the book. This book is an outstanding book if you are looking for a fictional non-fictional book.

*The Keeping Room* is a book we should all read for fun if you are looking for an adventure. The Novel is entertaining for some but for the most it is a novel of things happening constantly so the reader will not get bored. I recommend this book for everyone who like historical novels.

