

Summary Study Guide: Mama Bank Account by Kathryn Forbes

About the Author

Kathryn Forbes (1908-1966) was an American author known for her heartwarming and realistic depictions of working-class life in San Francisco during the Great Depression. Her most famous work, "Mama's Bank Account," is a memoir of her childhood and her strong-willed mother, Mama Thompson.

Plot Summary

"Mama's Bank Account" follows the Thompson family through their struggles and triumphs during the 1930s. Mama, the matriarch of the family, is a practical, resourceful woman who works tirelessly to keep her household afloat. Despite their poverty, the Thompsons are a close-knit family with a strong sense of love and resilience.



Summary & Study Guide Mama's Bank Account by Kathryn Forbes by Rosemarie Allen

★★★★☆ 4.3 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 134 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Print length : 35 pages
Lending : Enabled



The story centers around Mama's efforts to save money for her children's future. She opens a secret bank account and deposits every penny she can spare. Through her determination and sacrifice, Mama's bank account grows steadily, becoming a symbol of hope for her family.

Characters

Mama Thompson: The protagonist and central figure of the story. Mama is a strong, determined woman who faces life's challenges with courage and optimism.

Papa Thompson: Mama's kind and gentle husband. Papa is a hardworking man but often struggles to find steady employment.

Nellie Thompson: The narrator of the story and Mama's eldest daughter. As a young girl, Nellie witnesses Mama's struggles and gains a deep appreciation for her mother's sacrifices.

Chuck Thompson: Nellie's younger brother, a mischievous and energetic boy. Chuck brings joy and laughter into his family's life.

Kate Thompson: Nellie's younger sister, a shy and sensitive girl. Kate struggles with health issues throughout the story.

Themes

Family and Love: "Mama's Bank Account" highlights the importance of family bonds. Despite their financial struggles, the Thompsons are a loving and supportive family who face life's challenges together.

Resilience and Perseverance: The story is a testament to the human spirit's remarkable ability to persevere through adversity. Mama's determination to save money for her children's future serves as an inspiration to all who face financial hardships.

Sacrifice and Giving: Mama's selflessness is a recurring theme in the story. She sacrifices her own comfort and needs to provide a better life for her children.

Social Justice: Forbes does not shy away from addressing the social and economic inequalities that plagued San Francisco during the Depression. The story sheds light on the struggles faced by the working class and the importance of community support.

Writing Style

"Mama's Bank Account" is written in a simple and straightforward prose style. Forbes's use of vivid imagery and authentic dialogue brings the characters and setting to life. The story is told from Nellie's perspective, giving readers an intimate glimpse into Mama's life and the impact she had on her family.

Study Guide

Questions for Discussion:

* How does Mama's character challenge gender stereotypes of the time? * Discuss the role of community in supporting families during the Great Depression. * What are the ways in which Mama's bank account becomes a symbol of both financial freedom and family unity? * How does Nellie's perspective shape the story and our understanding of Mama's character? *

What can we learn from Mama's example about the importance of perseverance, sacrifice, and family bonds?

Literary Analysis:

* Examine the use of foreshadowing in the story and its effect on the reader's expectations. * Discuss the significance of setting in Forbes's writing and how it influences the characters and plot. * Analyze the symbolism of money in the story and its connection to Mama's values and aspirations. * Explore the themes of class and poverty in the story and how they shape the lives of the Thompson family. * Compare "Mama's Bank Account" to other works of literature that deal with similar themes, such as "The Grapes of Wrath" by John Steinbeck or "The Jungle" by Upton Sinclair.

Activities:

* Conduct a research project on the Great Depression and its impact on families. * Create a timeline of Mama's financial struggles and triumphs. * Write a letter to Mama expressing your admiration for her strength and resilience. * Create a family tree for the Thompson family and explore the relationships between its members. * Plan a class presentation that highlights the themes and literary significance of "Mama's Bank Account."



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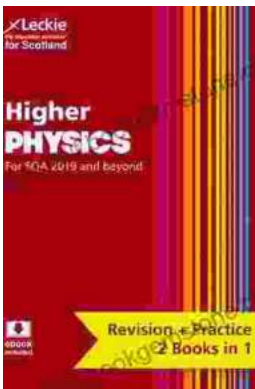
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