



TEEN SERVICES COMMUNITY SERVICE TEEN BOOK REVIEW

And Every Morning The Way Home Gets Longer And Longer By Fredrik Backman Reviewed by Ariel Whitman

Name: Ariel Whitman

Grade: 12

Book Title: *And Every Morning the Way Home Gets Longer and Longer*

Author: Fredrik Backman

Number of Pages: 76

Rating (on a scale of 1-5): 4/5

Character List:

- **Grandpa / Dad** – Grandpa, who remains a nameless character throughout the book, is an older gentleman in his seventies who, after the love of his life died, began to suffer from an incurable brain degenerative disease. He, a lover of mathematics, adventuring, and especially his grandson, reviews his life with his grandson. However, each time he tries to recall his memories, less and less is there to remember, and he begins to fear a life where he loses his mind before his body.
- **Noah** – Grandpa's one and only grandson, he shares the same love for life and mathematics and adventuring that his grandpa does. He becomes the one person who Grandpa can trust with his fading memories. Essentially, he becomes the human archive for Grandpa's life.
- **Grandma** – Grandma is deceased when the story begins. However, she remains very much alive in the mind of her lover, Grandpa, and is the deity that he can look up to when he is feeling lost.
- **Ted** – Ted is the son of Grandpa / Dad and Grandma, and the father of Noah. He is very worried about his father and his incurable condition, which turns into anger at the world for allowing such a beautiful mind to fade away.

Review:

And Every Morning the Way Home Gets Longer and Longer appears as a short read for those who've waited until last minute to complete a book project for class, which, frankly, I consider myself in a category similar to that. However, what I believed to be a simple book became much more: a book about love between family, an internal struggle for one man struggling with a worsening case of Alzheimer's, and saying good-bye. The older man, Grandpa, spends time with his grandson and late wife in two dimensions: the real world, and inside his brain. Most of the book takes place inside Grandpa's brain, where he and his grandson are reviewing life on a bench in a park square overlooking a lake. That square, which I see as symbolic to the capacity of Grandpa's memories, fades more and more every day, until the point it becomes just a circle around the bench. He feels as if time is running out, and so he trusts his grandson, somebody that he sees himself in, to keep his memories alive.

This book, a short but heartwarming and heartbreaking story about a man who fears that he will lose his mind before his body, is one that I'd recommend to anyone looking to enjoy a quick story with engaging characters or kill some time. I love how this book is wrapped around symbolism, a unique writing style and recurring phrases that brings the story to life. In addition, this book is one that can definitely hit home: Alzheimer's is a common disease these days, and this novel accurately depicts the heartbreak one and his family goes through with age.

Taken aback by its simple yet deep story, I believe that more teens would enjoy this book as well. The elements of a story, specifically character development and literary devices, such as, as I mentioned, symbolism, and imagery, transform this novella into something more: a memorable read. In my own opinion, this book can teach a bunch of us lessons that we might take for granted: being able to say goodbye to a loved one, but with tears of joy rather than of sadness. Anyways, next time you're at the library, be sure to take a look at this book. I promise you it'll be one that you'd be hesitant to put down!