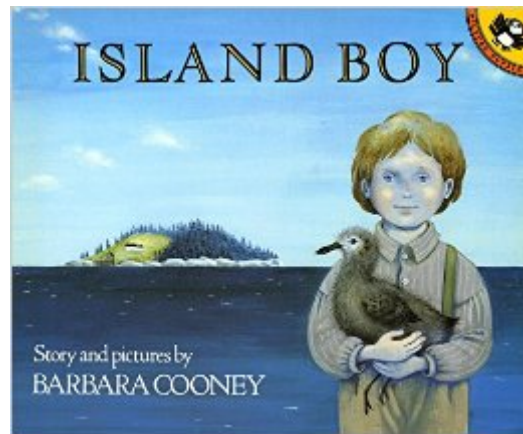


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# Island Boy (Picture Puffins)



## Synopsis

"Matthias is the youngest son in a family of 12 children who live with their parents on Tibbetts Island, Maine . . . When he is old enough to leave home, Matthias sails around the world, but always knows where his heart lies . . . a cherishable glimpse of a bygone time".--Publishers Weekly. Boston Globe/Horn Book Award. Full-color illustrations.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: AD660L (What's this?)

Series: Picture Puffins

Paperback: 38 pages

Publisher: Puffin Books; Reprint edition (June 1, 1991)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0140507566

ISBN-13: 978-0140507560

Product Dimensions: 9.8 x 0.1 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 4.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (21 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #41,467 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #31 in [Books > Children's Books >](#)

[Geography & Cultures > Where We Live > Country Life](#)

Age Range: 3 - 5 years

Grade Level: Preschool - Kindergarten

## Customer Reviews

Through the eyes of Matthias we watch the times change from a bucolic country life by the sea to a vacation haven for the rich and wealthy mainlanders. But throughout Matthias and his family strive to keep the island beautiful and respect the old ways passing them on from one generation to the next. The pastoral illustrations convey the warmth of this possibly best of Barbara Cooney's tales. Boys will especially like it, although my daughters loved it, too.

Barbara Cooney's "Island Boy" is one of the most beautifully illustrated children's stories I have seen. It follows the life of a young boy from childhood through his elder years and finally to his death. It portrays life during the early history of this country and portrays both the hardships and the challenges faced by early settlers. However, it also has to be one of the most realistic and depressing stories for young readers that has been written. The different characters die, some

violently, and the years pass without any uplifting passages. While realism is to be applauded, reading this book to my four-year old grandson raised more troubling questions and fears than I felt were necessary. I recommend parents and grandparents read "Island Boy" prior to sharing it with children so the adult may determine whether the child, particularly those who may be more sensitive, is ready for the more depressing aspects of the book. It is because of this that I rated "Island Boy" a four-star book.

Having grown up in the exact area this book is written about, I can say with certainty that the pictures are so realistic and gorgeous they made me cry. They capture exactly the houses, fields, seas and trees of the mid-coast Maine region. The story is wonderful also. I love children's book that cover a whole life as this one does---we follow the main character from his babyhood until his death, and see how his life closely connected to the sea and the land affects so many around him. In doing so, we see a little Maine history presented---the age of the sea captain and the age of the "rusticators" buying up the beautiful land and sometimes reducing the natives to working for them, but NEVER being servants to them. The maps on the endpages fascinated my older son. They are of I think a slightly fantasy Maine, with some places being real places and others renamed, and he loved trying to see what was really what, as he knows the area to some extent. I would say this would be a wonderful addition to your picture book library, as most Cooney books are!

An American classic by Barbara Cooney. She is just now getting the wide recognition she deserves. If you love Maine, especially Mid-Coast Maine, you will find it wonderfully familiar.. This should be in every little boy's library.

It might seem dated to some folks, but there is nothing dated or old about having family, loving your family, learning and loving and appreciating where you live. Not only a good read but a solid foundational story. The illustrations are beautiful.

Island Boy was a book that my parents read to me when I was a child. I purchased it as a gift for family friends who have young children. The story is classic, touching on family dynamics, growing up, seeing the world but staying in touch with your roots. Even in a children's book you feel the attachment to the characters and the illustrations have always been a favorite of mine. I would recommend this book to anybody I know.

Let me get this out of the way: As a kid, before I fell asleep at night, I would make up stories about a family who lived on a farming island off the coast of Maine and had twelve children, six boys and six girls. (The major difference between this book and my story was that my narrator was the middle girl, named Inga, and had braided blond pigtails.) Anyway, just based on that childhood bedtime hobby, I was bound to love this book. It is one of the very best picture books I've ever read, right up there with "Liza Lou and the Yeller Belly Swamp". The maps are lovely, the illustrations are amazing. They are done in the folk art style, and are absolutely beautiful and very detailed. The prose and illustrations match, somehow- spare, yet rich. Childlike, but very appealing to adults. It's hard to explain, but it's the same kind of magic that a great kids' animated movie has- the kids love it ALMOST as much as the parents. Part of me wishes it was a novel, so it wouldn't be over so quickly. And part me thinks, "Why mess with perfection?"

I have enjoyed reading this book to children for years (I'm a teacher). My two sons, ages 9 and 6, still request that I read it to them when we read aloud to each other. The story is a classic tale of the cycles of life, and how you really CAN go home again. I always cry at the end. I recommend it for ages 3 and up. Get ready to answer some weighty kid questions.

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