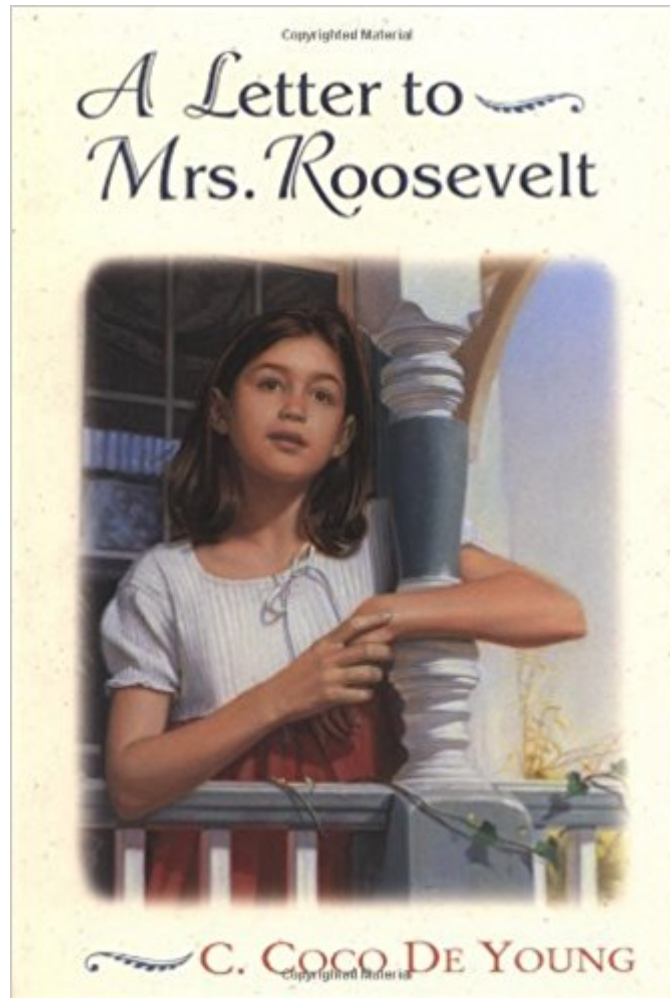




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# A Letter To Mrs. Roosevelt



## Synopsis

Eleven-year-old Margo Bandini has never been afraid of anything. Her life in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, with Mama and Papa and her little brother, Charlie, has always felt secure. But it's 1933, and the Great Depression is changing things for families all across America. One day the impossible happens: Papa cannot make the payments for their house, and the Sheriff Sale sign goes up on their door. They have two weeks to pay the bank, or leave their home forever. Now Margo is afraid--but she's also determined to find a way to help Papa save their home.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 0690 (What's this?)

Paperback: 112 pages

Publisher: Yearling; Reprint edition (August 8, 2000)

Language: English

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Product Dimensions: 5.2 x 0.3 x 7.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 3.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 35 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #252,710 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #92 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Difficult Discussions > Homelessness & Poverty](#) #336 in [Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > United States > 1900s](#) #6291 in [Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life](#)

Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

## Customer Reviews

First-time author De Young uses her own family history to create a Depression-era story about first-generation Italian-Americans living in Johnstown, Pa., in 1933. Eleven-year-old Margo Bandini, her parents and young brother, Charlie, face losing their house if they do not find a way to pay back the bank loan used to cover hospital expenses for Charlie's emergency leg operation. In a letter, Margo appeals to Eleanor "Everywhere" Roosevelt, the person she admires most, for help. Her teacher (who moonlights as a reporter and knows the First Lady) provides a swift, personal delivery of the letter and soon Margo receives a reply that restores her faith in miracles and resolves the crisis. Despite its rather contrived conclusion, this historic novel is successful in conveying the

climate of the times: the "domino" effect of the steel mill cutting back workers' hours translating into failing businesses and the necessity of neighbors relying on one another for support during hard times. Margo emerges as an admirable heroine whose actions reveal a generous heart and determination to help her family hold on to their home. Ages 8-12. Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

Grade 3-6-This Depression-era story is rich with the details of life in the small mining and steel town of Johnstown, PA. When her family is threatened with losing their home and business because they are unable to pay their bank loans, 11-year-old Margo Bandini writes a desperate letter to Mrs. Roosevelt as part of a class assignment. Margo has read about the First Lady's interest in children and her visits to people all over the world and hopes that the woman might find a way to save her home. With a little help from Margo's teacher, who is also a newspaper writer and a friend of Mrs. Roosevelt's, the letter gets the attention of the First Lady, who then arranges with the bank to refinance the family's loan as a part of the New Deal relief program. The outcome of this plot may seem outlandish, yet this novel is based on events that actually occurred in the author's family. The strong and believable female characters, the smooth integration of historical facts into the story, and the compelling first-person narrative make this a good choice for social-studies reading, historical-fiction assignments, or book discussion. Joan Zaleski, Hofstra University, Hempstead, NY Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Library Binding edition.

This book was a quick read. My kids and I finished it in the afternoons over a few days time. It captured the emotion and heartache of what families went through in the Great Depression. We loved it! So inspiring!

Although written for a young reader, even adults will enjoy this sweet tidbit of history during the FDRoosevelt era. It shows the hardships experienced during the depression, hardships which hit families so hard it makes you want to cry - yet there is a sweet slice of hope by two young girls. The one girl (main character) puts all her hope in "one basket" in a desperate means to help save others. This small book pulls you in and finds you cheering in your heart for the young girl. Very readable and very entertaining yet very realistic with history lessons within. A five star recommendation to buy and read!

I bought this book as part of a recommended supplement for my homeschooled 2nd grader. The

length of the chapters and book overall was appropriate for her reading level, and there were not significantly big words. So, this would lead one to believe that the book is aimed at young elementary. I believe the girl in the book is in 4th grade, so that maybe should have been an indication that it was not geared to my daughter. Regardless, the book was very boring and had several competing subplots, none of which were very developed, but all of which took attention away from the main story, which was that this girl's family was going to lose their house and she wrote a letter to the president's wife for help. The first half of the book tries to paint the setting, but it is only effective if someone already knows about the great depression. For elementary kids who are just learning about what it is, this book didn't give a very clear picture of what was going on or why. The true conflict of the story (about the girl's house) finally is introduced about halfway through. It is discussed awkwardly using terms such as "sheriff's auction" which are not defined. It made for tedious reading, as I had to continually stop and explain what was going on. And my daughter kept asking, "When is she going to write the letter?" The letter is actually a very small part of the story. It is only written I believe a chapter or two from the end, and it is resolved very quickly. There were a couple of exciting parts like when the main character is looking for her brother and believes she's being chased by a hobo or gypsy. But other than that, it was not a very enjoyable read-aloud. IMHO, the American Girl books about Kit are a much better introduction to the time period.

A+

I thought was wonderful because it told you had to stick up for your family even if your family can handle it. This is very good for girls who are going through hard times.

Thank you!

Great depression era story of one family's "victory" over the darkness that consumed so many

My students love the book. I will have to get more copies for them to check out of my class library.

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