



Always There, Rocking Chair

Tybre'ana Eaddy

Jezzus, Illustrator

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An heirloom's centrality to its family becomes clear following a storm in the heartfelt picture book Always There, Rocking Chair.

In Tybre'ana Eaddy's sentimental picture book *Always There, Rocking Chair*, a family learns to appreciate their steadfast rocking chair after it blows away in a storm.

A family with six children lives in a small house with a cozy porch, on which sits a yellow rocking chair that gets daily use. Indeed, the chair is personified as a member of the family. When a thunderstorm sweeps the chair away, the family struggles to find comfort on their porch. Finally, they find and repair their beloved rocker.

Opening with anchoring descriptions of the family home and the chair, the book covers busy routines of homework, play, socializing with neighbors, and resting in the evening prior to the storm. It's an idyllic, atmospheric introduction; the parents work hard to ensure that their children are happy and successful, and the faithful chair is always seen rocking in the background, available to curl up in to read a book or to play pretend upon. This calm exists in clear juxtaposition to the book's second part, in which the tight-knit family works to repair damage to their home and undergoes a desperate search for the rocker.

The language is evocative, with mentions of how "the air, damp with dew, carried the warm scent of coffee and biscuits." The "crackling thunder [that] rattled the trees" is made palpable too. Striking imagery fleshes out the setting and family dynamics, as when the mother's friends gather "for tea, spilling chamomile and secrets," or when the father sinks into the rocking chair's seat and drifts "off to sleep ... His snores echoed each sway, and the stars twinkled in time."

The warm illustrations illuminate their joyful scenes in golden hues and apply dark blues and grays to depictions of the storm's aftermath. However, the family's wide, dispassionate eyes are disconcerting and distracting. People's body language is more complementary to the tale: The family members huddle around a table during the storm, slump into the rocking chair when exhausted, and are seen reattaching shutters and repotting plants. Fine lines and realistic shading further vivify the images, in which the contrast of the damaged house's missing bricks and cracked windows with its rejuvenated siding, vibrant floral arrangements, and patched-up rocking chair is remarkable.

In the nostalgic picture book *Always There, Rocking Chair*, a family learns to cherish the items that provide them comfort and connection.

AIMEE JODOIN (April 18, 2026)

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