

Book Review: Mama Loves Me From Away

Contributed by Linda Grobman

Book review of *Mama Loves Me From Away*, by P. Brisson.

Brisson, P. (illustrated by Caple, L.) (2004). *Mama Loves Me From Away*. Honesdale, PA: Boyds Mills Press. 32 pages, \$15.95 hard cover.

This picture book, geared toward children ages 7 and up, tackles the difficult subject of a child's separation from her incarcerated mother. Sugar and her mom share the same birthday. "You're the best present I ever had," Mama tells Sugar. But on this particular birthday, they are not able to celebrate in their usual way. On this birthday, Sugar takes three long bus rides with Grammy to take Mama her birthday card.

The book does not delve into details, such as why Sugar's mother is in prison. Its focus is on the relationship and how Sugar copes with her mother being away. It portrays "Mama" as a loving and attentive mother who misses spending time alone with her daughter.

This story could be used by social workers to spark discussion with children whose parent is far away, especially if the parent is in prison. A social worker might read this book to or with a child, and then discuss how the story is similar to or different from the child's own experience. Such a discussion could then lead to an exploration of the child's feelings about the situation.

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