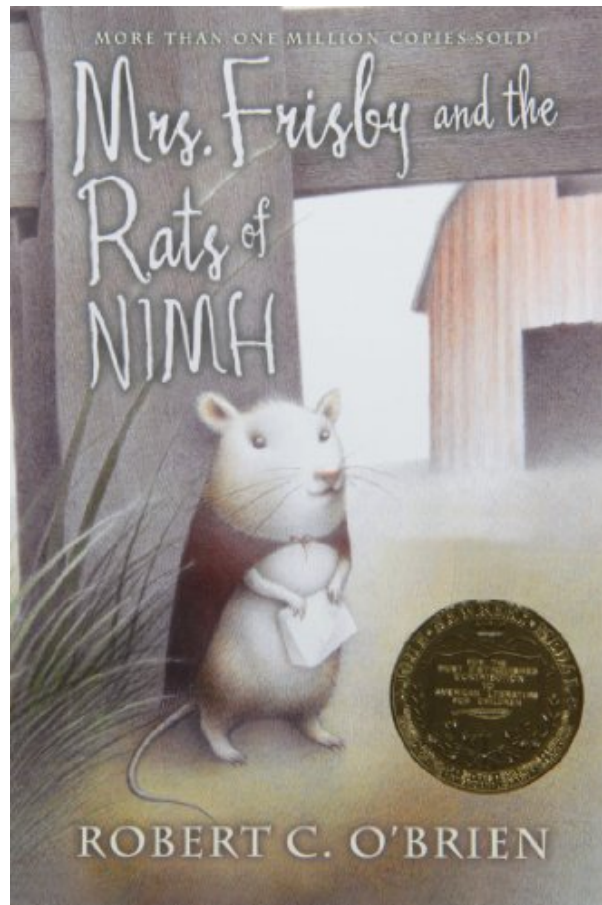
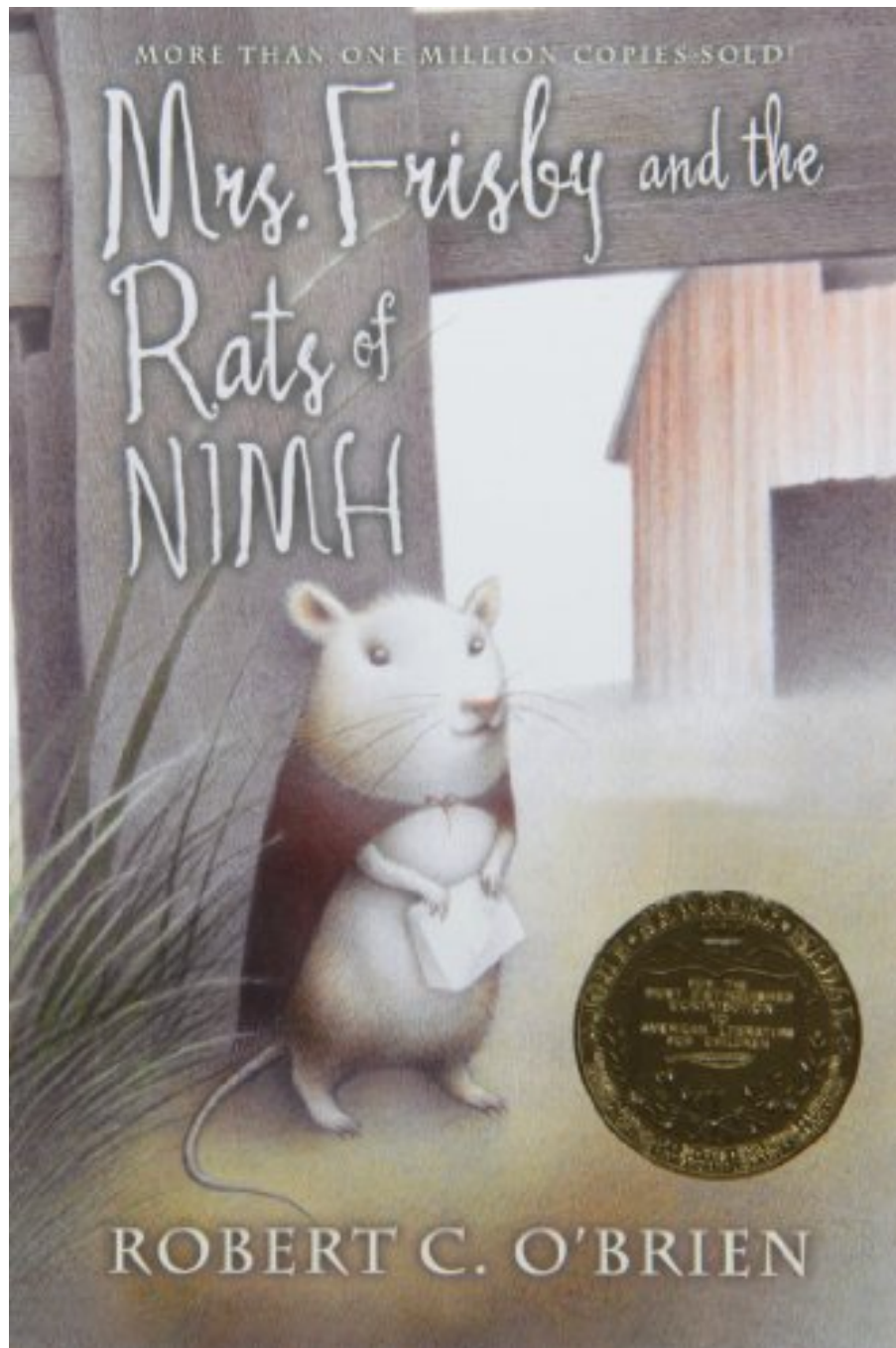


MRS. FRISBY AND THE RATS OF NIMH BY ROBERT C. O'BRIEN



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MRS. FRISBY AND THE RATS OF NIMH BY ROBERT C. O'BRIEN PDF

Some extraordinary rats come to the aid of a mouse family in this Newbery Medal Award-winning classic by notable children's author Robert C. O'Brien.

Mrs. Frisby, a widowed mouse with four small children, is faced with a terrible problem. She must move her family to their summer quarters immediately, or face almost certain death. But her youngest son, Timothy, lies ill with pneumonia and must not be moved. Fortunately, she encounters the rats of NIMH, an extraordinary breed of highly intelligent creatures, who come up with a brilliant solution to her dilemma. And Mrs. Frisby in turn renders them a great service.

- Sales Rank: #3383 in Books
- Brand: Aladdin
- Published on: 1997-11-03
- Released on: 1986-03-01
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.37" h x .60" w x 5.37" l, .35 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 240 pages

Features

- Great product!

Amazon.com Review

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This unusual novel, winner of the Newbery Medal (among a host of other accolades) snags the reader on page one and reels in steadily all the way through to the exhilarating conclusion. Robert O'Brien has created a small but complete world in which a mother's concern for her son overpowers her fear of all her natural enemies and allows her to make some extraordinary discoveries along the way. O'Brien's incredible tale, along with Zena Bernstein's appealing ink drawings, ensures that readers will never again look at alley rats and field mice in the same way. (Ages 9 to 12) --Emilie Coulter

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Most helpful customer reviews

323 of 360 people found the following review helpful.

Great book to use to start teaching subtext

By Amazon Customer

This is an ideal book to use to introduce older elementary students to the more sophisticated notion of subtext. My 11-year-old said, "Mom, I want to read better books," like her older siblings were doing. I said, "First you have to learn to read books better." And I handed her this one. I've used this with my oldest four (we homeschool) and it really, really makes them rethink reading.

I want to say ahead of time that I completely disagree with all the other reviews I've read about why this is a great book. It is a truly fine book, but not, in my opinion, for the reasons so frequently listed. If you are looking for escapist animal adventure and fantasy, go elsewhere. If you want an intense study of supremacist thinking, this is your book.

I have my 11 year olds read the book and come back with a summary, we chat, and basically all my kids had the same reaction as most kids: good story, great read, action, adventure, brave mouse, inventive heroic rats, etc.

I then start to ask questions. "How long did it take for the rats to move Timothy's house?" 1/2 an hour. "Was it hard for them?" No. "Why was Timothy sick?" General sickness and dampness in the old location. "Who was Timothy's father?" Jonathan, the NIMH mouse. "Friend of the rats?" Of course. "Then why didn't they take care of Jonathan's family after he died?" Silence. "Let's retrack... How did Jonathan die?" Helping the rats. "Did they make sure at least that his widow and children had a warm, secure place to live?" No. "Did they check in on her from time to time?" No. "Did they make sure she had enough to feed her children?" No. "Did they take on the education of her children knowing she was unable to?" No. "Did they ever offer anything at any time?" No. "So a friend dies helping you and though you have abundant resources and it would not be inconvenient in the least, you do absolutely nothing?" Silence. "Let's look more closely at these rats..."

And we begin to read the book together and read how they respond, how they never offer to help anyone no matter how simple it would be or how important it would be for the other animal, how they hoard their

resources and their knowledge, how their 'friendships' are based on how useful or beneficial the other animal is to them, how they see nothing wrong with any of that. How cold their feelings are towards others (at one point they watch mice, being blown away, trying desperately to grip smooth metal with their tiny nails, tumbling by to their deaths, "like leaves" and only one rat helps one mouse, a favor the mouse repays over and over and over again when in fact it was very little effort or danger for the rat to help him).

We begin to talk about their morality. Much is made by the rats that they don't want to live by stealing anymore. Rats are scavengers, not thieves. When these rats are first picked up, they were living off the refuse of the market, they are not thieves. It is not until after they have been genetically altered that they actually refuse to eat garbage and break into grocery stores and begin actually stealing. They do a lot of hand-wringing about how can they live without being thieves. The same way all the other animals on the farm do it: by foraging! But that is never an option to them. No, they must create their own farming community. But how... Oh, by STEALING everything they need to do it. And not once is it even considered that they could do much good around the farmer's house by repairing his equipment or otherwise blessing this family that they are so busy stealing from. What a different book it would be if the farmer were to be overheard saying to his wife, "I thought I would have to pay \$2000 to get the tractor fixed, but I went out there this morning and it turned over and ran like it was brand new. I can't explain it. More than makes up for the \$200 in seed that we lost last year." But they never, not once, offer to do anything for anyone whom they are stealing from, regardless of how much they are stealing or how easy it would be to do.

Their moral compass is also shown to be in a spiral when they come across a dead old man in a forest who has left a truck full of tools that are the perfect size for rats (he repaired toys). Who does the truck belong to? The heirs, says the leader. But we don't know who they are or how to get in touch with them, say the rats. Okay, then I guess it's ours if we want it, replies the leader. And they proceed to strip the truck. I then ask my 11 year old, "If you were to come across something that belonged to someone else, not a small thing that could be seen as lost or discarded but something big (like a vehicle full of equipment!) but you had no way to get in touch with who owned it, what would you do?" "Leave it alone." "Right. Would you assume that that gave you the right to take anything you wanted?" "No!" Right...

And the kids start to think, start to notice, start to reread sections. "Mom! Like here!" and "I never noticed this, but look!" And what they eventually start to see is that nowhere in the novel does the idea of helpful, inventive, heroic rats who aid a poor little mommy mouse even exist! The summary on the back of the book is a sham. The glowing reviews are shams. These rats are supremacists.

And the older the kids get the more they begin to realize that these are fascists. Only we matter, and we matter because we are the strongest, the most intellectually superior, and therefore all of our actions are justified. We are not responsible for weaker neighbors. If they can not survive, that is no concern of ours. We guard what is ours jealously. You are only welcome if you serve a purpose, and only as long as you serve that purpose. We owe you nothing. And you must take all the risk (that was a moment of revelation to one of my kids -- the rats used the mice to take all the risk!) before we will deign to even notice you. We will create a new society, one without any weakness, one without difference, one without you, only us.

Even at the end of the book, when the rats and the brave mouse mommy (she is that!) have been through the roughest of rough times together, do they invite her to join them? Let her family know where they are going? Say they'll come back and visit? No. They are off to build their utopia.

There is only one rat who shows some compassion, some genuine sense of friendship, and even he does some incredibly cold and calculated things.

So I give this book 5 stars and I challenge anyone to reread this after reading this and not see something new, something very quiet, but very loud. Ah, subtext...

We have to read books better. It is my job as a homeschooling mom to teach my kids how to do that. This is an absolutely wonderful book for that. Thank you, Robert O'Brien.

P.S. If you really want to see the truth of it, read the sequel, *Racso and the Rats of NIMH* written by his daughter. She completely ignores the original undertones and just goes with the surface stuff and writes her book as though these rats were always friendly and helpful and compassionate. The rats are almost unrecognizable...

68 of 72 people found the following review helpful.

Classic Children's Lit.

By Oddsfish

This is one of my favorites (if not my favorite). Stories just don't come better than this one, and *Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH* will be around for a long time.

The story is about Mrs. Frisby who is a mouse with four small children. One them gets sick and is unable to move even though their home is about to be plowed. Mrs. Frisby is a typical mother; she will do anything to protect her children. In this case, she appeals to the mysterious rats that live under the rose bush. There, she learns all about these mysterious rats in the most interesting and entertaining flashback in children's literature.

Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH is one of the best books that I have ever read. I read it in a day (when I was eleven) the first time, and I have read it three times since. *Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of NIMH* will always have a special place on my extensive bookshelf, and it should definately be read by people for years to come.

79 of 96 people found the following review helpful.

their struggle is our struggle : who knew?

By Orrin C. Judd

One of the great delights of returning, in adulthood, to the literature that enchanted us in childhood is the discovery of the great themes and subtexts to which we were oblivious then but which are so obvious now. *Mrs. Frisby* is a perfect illustration of this phenomenon. When you are young you are captivated by the animal adventure tale and your easy identification with the lowly mice.

But read it now and you realize the Biblical antecedents of the story, how the rats of NIMH, like Man, are given the gift of knowledge by their creators and how this awakens in them a sense of morality.

We recall that the rats have determined to go off and live on their own, but it's all too easy to forget, or never to notice, that the reason for their decision is that they are determined not to live by stealing.

Seeing clearly this additional component, that the rats have become moral creatures, makes their struggle even more heroic and adds a depth to the story that makes it easy to see why this novel has endured and struck a chord with readers, young and old, for some thirty years now. It is an altogether deserving classic.

GRADE : A+

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