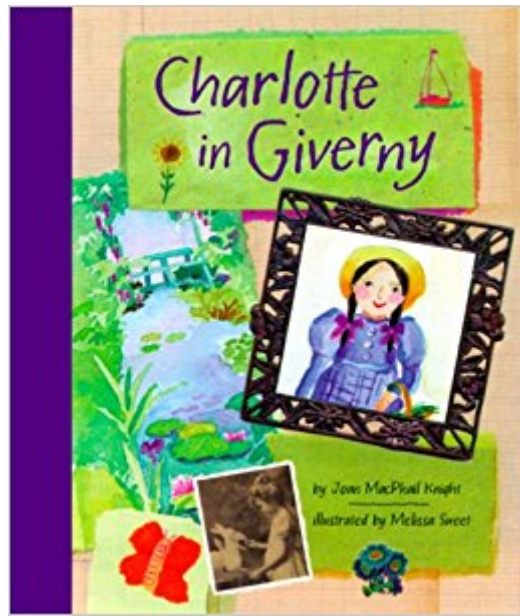




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# Charlotte In Giverny



## Synopsis

It's 1892 and Charlotte is bound for Monet's famous artist colony in Giverny, France, where painters like her father are flocking to learn the new style of painting called Impressionism. In spite of missing her best friend, Charlotte becomes enchanted with France and records her colorful experiences in her journal. She makes new friends, plants a garden, learns to speak French, and even attends the wedding of Monsieur Monet's daughter! Illustrated with beautiful museum reproductions and charming watercolor collages, *Charlotte in Giverny* includes a French glossary as well as biographical sketches of the featured painters. This delightful journal of a young girl's exciting year will capture readers' imaginations and leave a lasting impression.

## Book Information

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Grade Level: Preschool - 7

## Customer Reviews

Part faux diary, part scrapbook, this charming volume teeters between picture book and novel. Through the 1892 "journal" of young Charlotte Glidden, daughter of a fictitious Boston painter, Knight (Bon Appétit, Bertie) uncovers the inner workings of an artist's colony that sprang up near Claude Monet's home in France. Charlotte's enthusiastic, detailed reports emulate the more leisurely pace of 19th-century daily life in Giverny, and her perceptions of French culture and customs, art and artists give readers the distinct feeling of looking over her shoulder. Knight adroitly pins the substance of her tale to 16 Impressionist paintings, some of which are attributed to

characters in the book. For instance, Charlotte describes her friend Edith Perry sitting for a portrait her mother is painting, and the painter turns out to be Lilla Cabot Perry. Similarly, Theodore Robinson's *The Wedding March* appears in Charlotte's diary entry about the marriage of Suzanne Monet to American artist Theodore Butler. Knight also works in paintings by other Impressionists who don't appear in the narrative but who did spend time at Giverny, such as an unusually informal painting by John Singer Sargent, *Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose*. *Sweet (Leaving Vietnam)* adds to the visual mix with a whimsical patchwork of sprightly watercolors and small-scale collages made from scraps of fabric, stamps, period photographs, a mini-picture glossary of French words and the like. Closing with a brief description of each painting and biography of each artist, this is a most appealing art history lesson. Ages 6-10. Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Grade 4-7-Similar in theme and style to Christina Björk's *Linnea in Monet's Garden* (R & S Bks, 1987), this story depicts the period of a young American girl's life spent with her family in the French countryside in the early 1890s. Presented in a journal/scrapbook format, the narrative describes Charlotte's family's arrival in Giverny, where her father plans to paint, and the ambience of the bucolic community where Monet reigns as an impressive, if somewhat remote, artistic master. The passing of the seasons is recounted through a series of social, domestic, creative, and pastoral pastimes. Despite her enjoyment of Giverny's agreeable diversions, Charlotte is mildly homesick until she learns that her best friend and her family will be joining them soon. Thus, the only real tension in the story is facilely resolved. All of the entries are amply illustrated with fine-art reproductions; historical photographs; and whimsical, naïve watercolors. The craftsmanship of the bookmaking lends the impression of a real journal with its binding and typeface. A list of credits identifying the famous paintings and artists is included. However, while attractive, the narrative lacks verve and fails to place the story in its adequate historical perspective. Impressionism and Monet's place in this pivotal artistic movement are not adequately addressed here. While this pretty book may be useful as supplemental material, it is ultimately derivative and lackluster. Rosalyn Pierini, San Luis Obispo City-County Library, CA Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc.

This is a lovely story about a girl's move to France. She is the daughter of a painter who is going to learn Impressionism from Monet. The story is written as a journal and includes beautiful photos and paintings. At the end, there are short biographical sketches of the various artists presented. The book also contains many French words, which are always fun to learn. For children interested in art and travel this is a wonderful story.

I love this series of books. I am an adult and have read all of them. They are charming and perfect for young girls or anyone interested in life among the artists in the late 1800s in Europe and New York. Nice famous art work pictures throughout the book to illustrate the story. Highly recommended.

This was gift for young lady who is interested in art.

Bought this book for my 6 year old, since she's half french. It's written in a "journal" style, which was perfect because they are now keeping a journal in her kindergarten class. It took us several days to read through this book (several pages a night at bedtime), which was fun as both she and my 4 year old son looked forward to hearing more about Charlotte's life in Giverny.

I loved this when I first read it. And I bought it for a friend for Christmas - still waiting to celebrate together. I am sure she will love it too.

Book arrived as promised and in excellent condition.

In this case, the reader reviews are more perceptive than the School Library Journal reviewer quoted in editorial reviews. The book is a window for young people, including my 9-year old daughter who is intrigued by the interweaving of the fictional journal entries with the content of the visual reproductions. Part of the story hinges on the American painters who go to learn from the French Impressionists there and hence the mix of both American and French painters. The book does assume that the readers can find out further historical information on the place of Monet et al, but what Pierini does not seem to appreciate here is the subtlety with which things are presented. The historical perspective here includes more of the entire lived experience of Giverny, not another bored, tired, dry recounting of historical fact. The strength of this lovely book is that it presents a world to enter, reminiscent of the look and feel of the Griffin and Sabine books way back when. The illustrator's montages, the blending of art pieces, photo-realist artifacts, Charlotte's own drawings and pictures is very adept (the cover gives you some idea of this technique). This kind of book then sparks my daughter's artistic imagination - and I think it is pleasurable for adults as well. The paperback is a mere \$7 and has so much more depth and staying power than other books many times the price. There are not that many books that hook my daughter so strongly. If yours has artistic inclinations, this is a wonderful little book.

For anyone, child or adult, who has even a passing interest in the arts, "Charlotte in Giverny" is a kind of magical time-machine disguised as a children's book that takes the reader into the world of artists and villagers who had the good fortune to find themselves in Giverny, the revered artist's colony outside of Paris, in the late 1800's. Presented as the diary of a young girl who travels to Giverny from Boston with her parents (her father is a painter) in the 1890's, "Charlotte in Giverny" is rife with the joy of discovery. Charlotte (a girl with a sense of mischief) is heartbroken in the beginning at having to leave her best friend behind, but grows eager to explore her new world. Through her eyes, we make new friends, see new places, learn new things. Her shipboard departure from Boston, her awed introduction to Paris, and the year she lives in the beautiful Normandy countryside, are all richly illustrated. Reproductions of Impressionist paintings, postcards, photographs and ephemera from the period, as well as charming watercolor and collage illustrations by Melissa Sweet give the book a visual quality that's authentic and beautiful. The result is a rare and unusual treat, a treasure of a book for all ages to enjoy.

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