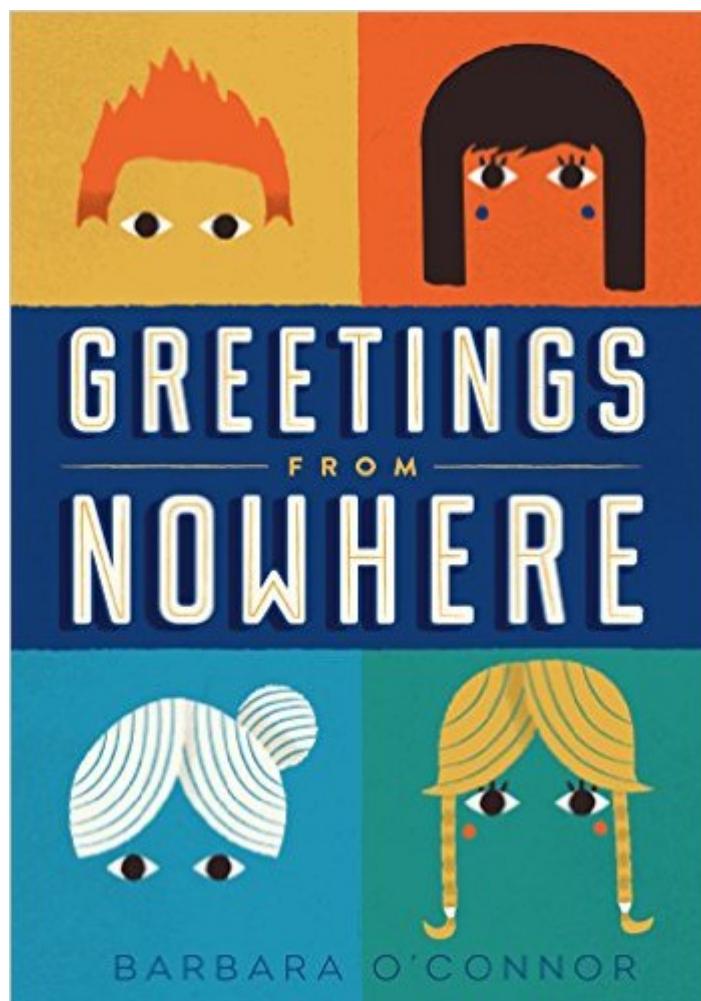


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# Greetings From Nowhere



## **Synopsis**

Aggie isn't expecting visitors at the Sleepy Time Motel in the Great Smoky Mountains. Since her husband died, she is all alone with her cat, Ugly, and keeping up with the bills has become impossible. When she places a For Sale ad in the newspaper, Aggie doesn't know that Kirby and his mom will need a room when their car breaks down on the way to Kirby's new reform school. Or that Loretta and her parents will arrive in her dad's plumbing company van on a trip meant to honor the memory of Loretta's birth mother. Or that Clyde Dover will answer the For Sale ad and move in with his daughter, Willow, looking for a brand-new life after Willow's mom left. Perhaps the biggest surprise of all is that Aggie and her guests find just the friends they need at the shabby motel in the middle of nowhere. From an author long recognized for her true Southern voice and heartfelt characters, *Greetings from Nowhere*, with its four intertwining stories, brings Barbara O'Connor's work to a new level of sophistication. This title has Common Core connections.

## **Book Information**

Paperback: 224 pages

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Best Sellers Rank: #72,512 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #51 in Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Where We Live > Country Life #2799 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life #3150 in Books > Children's Books > Action & Adventure

Age Range: 10 - 13 years

Grade Level: 5 - 8

## **Customer Reviews**

Amazing story with so many characters woven together to create a wonderful storyline. Although the characters were different ages all of them taught each other an important life lesson. I read it in one day and couldn't put it down! Tremendous read-suggested for read aloud in an intermediate classroom or even book clubs. It will lead to excellent conversations.

In Greetings from Nowhere by Barbara O'Connor, widow Agnes Duncan is going to have to sell the Sleepy Time Motel that she and her husband Harold used to run. Guests are not coming, and the place is falling apart. But just as she's about to sign the papers, three families arrive, each with a troubled child. Loretta's biological mom has died and left her with a charm bracelet showing all the places she might have gone. Now Loretta's adoptive parents are taking her on a journey to discover those places. Kirby's mom is taking him to a military-style school, but her car died and she ran out of money before she got there. Meanwhile, Willow's mom Dorothy has left her and her father, Clyde, and her dad wants to start a new life by buying the old motel. This is a light and beautiful tale, filled with love and perfect details that make a person feel good.

O'Connor has crafted what may be her most heartfelt and engaging story yet, with a memorable cast of characters who spend a few lifechanging days together at the Sleepy Time Motel in the Smoky Mountains. Short chapters with alternating points of view blend into a smoothly woven text that reveals just the right amount of backstory to expose the dreams and difficulties which have led the assorted travelers to their common destination. A great classroom readaloud or gift book that invites readers of all ages to "sit and ponder" the mysteries of friendship between generations.

Greetings from Nowhere is about four main characters, five if you count the motel, which I would. Every character has his or her own story, and, of course, the stories will overlap during the course of the book. There is something so very sweet about Barbara O'Connor's characters. On the surface, they seem simple, lacking complexity and perhaps even facile, but that is only because she does not write down every word of their stories. She leaves it to the readers to fill in the framework of the characters story, and, so, no two people will ever read this book the same way. In a way, the reader becomes part of the book. If the reader chooses to skim this book, the characters may never take on life beyond these two hundred or so pages. If the reader, instead, tries to relate to the characters, tries to see the world from the characters' point of view, then the characters will gain depth and complexity and even immortality. It doesn't take me long to read a Barbara O'Connor -- three or four hours, maybe -- but her characters will stay with me for a very long time. A writer with a light touch should not be mistaken for a light-weight writer.

When you read more than one of an author's books, there is the natural tendency to compare them and ask yourself which one is your favorite. In the case of Barbara

O'Connor's works, that's an almost impossible question to answer. First, let me say if you don't go out and get *Wish* as soon as it hits the stores this week, you are going to miss out on all the fun and excitement that's exploding in the book world from this, her newest. Then, after falling in love with *Wish*, if you haven't read her others, like *How to Steal a Dog*, *The Small Adventure of Popeye and Elvis*, or one of the fourteen others, get going. Most of all, do not miss *Greetings from Nowhere* where a heartfelt experience unfolds at a down on its heels motel in the Great Smokey Mountains. In addition to being everything you want from a middle grade book, the craftsmanship here is extraordinary. This book is a study in how to write multiple fraught points of view and bring them together in a memorable and gratifying ending.

The Sleepy Time Motel has seen better days. Days when guests actually showed up and enjoyed the free coffee, the complimentary maps. But Aggie's beloved Harold died and the last visitors signed the motel register nearly three months ago. So even though it's breaking Aggie's heart, she's put her Shawnee Gap, North Carolina motel, in the heart of the Smoky Mountains, up for sale. Barbara O'Connor takes three kids with little in common but the fate that put them at the Sleepy Time together, mixes them with Aggie and her cat named Ugly, and delivers a story for middle grade readers that sparkles. Young fans of her many award-winning books will find *Greetings from Nowhere* endearing, poignant, and even funny. By the end of this story, readers will come to realize that everyone has something worth paying attention to if you dig deep enough. And what started out as "nowhere"? That little motel in the heart of the Smokey Mountains turns into one terrific vacation spot. Just loved this novel. A must read!

First of all, I love this book! It's beautiful and heart-warming. Once you start reading it, you really want to finish it. To find the answers to all the questions that are raised from the book. I would recommend this book to ages 9-13. All in all, I LOVE this book!

I just finished reading *Greetings from Nowhere*. What a beautifully crafted story. If I could write, this is the story I would want to tell. The characters are so well-defined that the reader develops a close relationship with each one. I was sad when I reached the end. The story was over much too soon. I can't wait to share this book with my fifth graders. I know that they will feel my enthusiasm and will want to read it as well. Thank you, Ms. O'Connor. I am looking forward to reading your other books. I hope you will consider a sequel, so that I can learn what happens to Aggie, Willow, Loretta, and most of all, Kirby. I have known many Kirbys during my teaching career.

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