

Fiona's Lace

by Patricia Polacco

Review: Last week we read the first part of the book. The story begins in Ireland. The economy is terrible and people are leaving their village and going to America. The two girls in the book love to hear the story of how their parents met when their father followed a trail of lace to their mother's house. The Hughes family makes the journey to America, hoping to live a good life working for a rich family in Chicago.

sprooker/sprook - to try to persuade someone to do or buy something; in this story, people calling out and selling merchandise from carts

Laird - in this story, it means the Lord/God

Banshee - in Irish legend, a female spirit whose wailing warns of an impending death in a house.

shabby - in poor condition especially because of age or use

rattrap - a run-down, dirty, or dilapidated building

levy - an amount of money that must be paid and that is collected by a government or other authority

posh - very attractive, expensive, and popular

pretty penny - to be expensive; to cost a lot of money

whirl - to turn rapidly in circles

shiver - to shake slightly because you are cold, afraid, etc.

oblige - to do something that someone has asked you to do: to do a favor for (someone)

soot - a black powder that is formed when wood or coal is burned

hallowed - holy or blessed; respected

Fiona's lace eventually became a family heirloom and has been passed down through generations and is still used as part of each new bride's veil. Introduce yourself and tell

the group if there is something that your family passes down — like a ring, jewelry, candlesticks, tablecloth, or recipes.

The Great Chicago Fire started at 9:30 Sunday evening, October 8, 1871 in the barn of the O’Leary family. This was very close to the home of Fiona and her family. There is a story that the O’Leary’s cow knocked over a lantern in the barn. Although firefighters believe that this was the location where the fire started, there is no proof of the story about the cow.



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After reading the first half of the story, what did you think might happen next? Were you surprised at how the story ended?

Annie tells the girls, “It’s in your heart home resides, and it will remain there as long as you remember those you love.” What does this mean to you?

Fiona’s lace served to remind family members of the faith and love that helped them over generations as they overcame hardships and saw many of those hardships turned into blessings. Can you think of a time when something that was sad or hard turned out to have a blessing in it?

At Halloween, the girls did not want to hear a scary story. They wanted to hear the familiar story about their parents and their former home in Ireland. What helps you when you feel homesick?

What do the pictures tell you about what life was like in Ireland and Chicago? Do you have other comments about the illustrations or how they help to tell the story?

Fiona and her mother were talented lace makers. Their father was a wonderful storyteller. What is your special talent?

