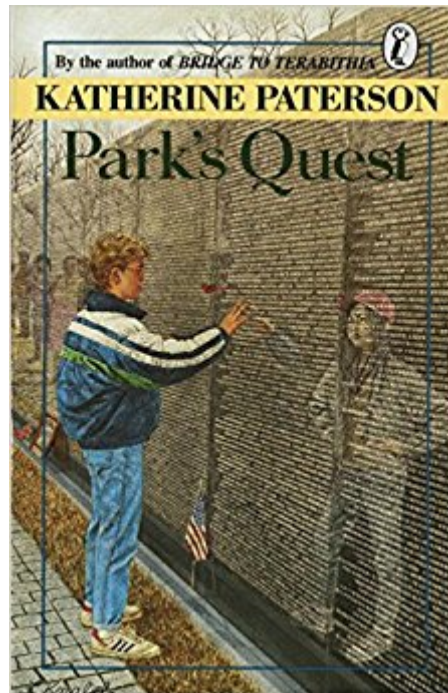




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# Park's Quest



## Synopsis

Written by Newbery Medalist, National Book Award winner, and Laura Ingalls Wilder Medal recipient Katherine Paterson, *Park* can't figure out why his mother refuses to talk about his father who died in Vietnam. Park has no memory of him. But he is determined to find out the answers to his questions. When Park's search finally takes him to his grandfather's farm in rural Virginia, he meets obstacles beyond his imagining. Instead of being welcomed as the long lost heir, he is taunted by a young Vietnamese girl. Who is she, and what is she doing on the family farm? And will Park be able to accept the ultimate truth he has sought?

## Book Information

Paperback: 160 pages

Publisher: Puffin Books; Reprint edition (September 1, 1989)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0440840678

ISBN-13: 978-0140342628

ASIN: 0140342621

Product Dimensions: 5.1 x 0.4 x 7.7 inches

Shipping Weight: 5.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.2 out of 5 stars 18 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #584,316 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #138 in [Books > Teens > Education & Reference > History > Military](#) #284 in [Books > Teens > Historical Fiction > Military](#) #290 in [Books > Teens > Mysteries & Thrillers > Historical](#)

## Customer Reviews

Park's mother won't answer his questions about his father, who was killed in Vietnam, but eventually agrees to let Park visit his father's family in Virginia. Nothing he finds there is what he expected but, in Paterson's insightful novel, everyone concerned finds reconciliation. Ages 10-up. Copyright 1989 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Grade 6 Up Like the heroes of his Arthurian fantasies, Park has a quest. Kept in the dark by a mother whose memories are too painful for her to face, Park knows nothing of his father, who was killed in Vietnam. The dedication of the Vietnam War Memorial arouses his need to know, and Park sets out to find the man who was his father from the family he left behind. What he finds is not at all what he expected: an invalid grandfather, an uncle his mother never mentioned, a truculent

Vietnamese girl, and a host of unpleasant surprises. If the characters in this novel seem incomplete and they do it may be because all are victims of the war, their lives stalled mid-course, their chance to right a wrong denied them by the finality of death. Only Park's uncle has been able to pick up the pieces of his life (and his brother's) and go on. But Paterson suggests that the others, together, may yet do the same. What young readers will make of this remains to be seen. Much reading between the lines is necessary to discern characters' motivations; careful attention is required to follow quick transitions of plot and a confusing timetable of events. Puzzling questions and loose ends remain. In grappling with large issues, Paterson seems to have lost control of small details. Still, she gives readers much to ponder at all levels and a sufficiently engaging plot to draw them on. Margaret Rostkowsky's *After the Dancing Days* (Harper, 1986) deals with similar issues (albeit an earlier war) in a more tightly structured framework. Thoughtful readers will gain from reading both titles. Marcia Hupp, The Ferguson Library, Stamford, Conn. Copyright 1988 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

This is not really a favorite of mine. It might have been the subtly...misogynist would be too strong a word...male biased perspective. (I don't think this was necessarily the author's intention, or if it was, it could have to do with creating a sense of realism that this is a boy with issues talking during the late 1980's, since he was also quite racist.) Even with this, it is an opportunity to uncover those subtle messages of blame and judgment on the female characters and talk about them and why men generally receive different treatment in the book, so if someone had to read it for class, for example, a Good teacher might bring up these ideas. Otherwise, it leaves you with a somewhat icky feeling, or at least it did with me. As I mentioned, in a solid class environment, this book has plenty of themes and historical events to draw from, what with plot points revolving around the Vietnam War and Arthurian legend. As far as reading it for pleasure, I'd skip this one and pick something a little better with more dimensional characters with a more enlightening journey. This fell flat of my expectations...I think three stars is quite generous.

very good book!!!!

Very good condition

This book, to put it in short, just wasn't great. I wouldn't go as far as to say it was the worst book I've ever read, but I'd have to say it's the worst book that I've ever finished. It just wasn't the kind of thing

you'd look back on and say, "Wow, I really enjoyed reading that." The writing style was confusing at times, because of Park's daydreams about knights and chivalry. He considers his mission to find out about his father like a knightly "quest." You got used to it after a while, though. Some other things that were confusing were the way Paterson introduces "Randy" as Park's mom. Before that, it had always said "his mother", or "his mom", and then it just refers to her as "Randy", and I guess we're supposed to catch on. The first twelve chapters were an agony to read, and I would sum them up as monotonous schlock. To me, they were uneventful. I would say they were the very worst twelve chapters I've ever read. I also really didn't like Park's racist attitude, and the way the author says "So what if he got some Oriental disease" or "He still couldn't believe that Frank would marry one of them", referring to the Vietnamese people in the story, really annoyed me. I really didn't like Park as a protagonist. As one reviewer said, he was a kid with issues, but still, he was very unlikable. The last two chapters really made up for it, though. I saw Park change a bit as a character, and the ending was sad, but pretty satisfying. Overall, it was not a great book, not really a good book either. It was also a sad book, and the ending didn't change that either. I just think it could have been better, and that I've read much, much better.

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I remember reading this book in 6th grade. I hated it. See that kids review up there? That pretty much summed up how I felt about it. It confused the hell out of me, that Park kid never stopped day dreaming. I didn't like Park as a character. I remember we all had to read books in groups. I saw Parks Quest and thought "Oh cool Vietnam!" I had this obsession with war book back then, and I just read this really cool journal about a soldier who was in the Vietnam war. I also remember the back of the book being misleading. It seemed way cooler when I read the back. But its just all boring garbage. Terrible story. I regret reading this. Out of all the books this author has written I feel that this is her WORST. Want to read a cool book about Vietnam? Read The Journal of Patrick Seamus Flaherty. That was the journal I was talking about. It also gives you more of a real feeling about how the war actually was. Don't read about Park and his terribly boring quest.

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