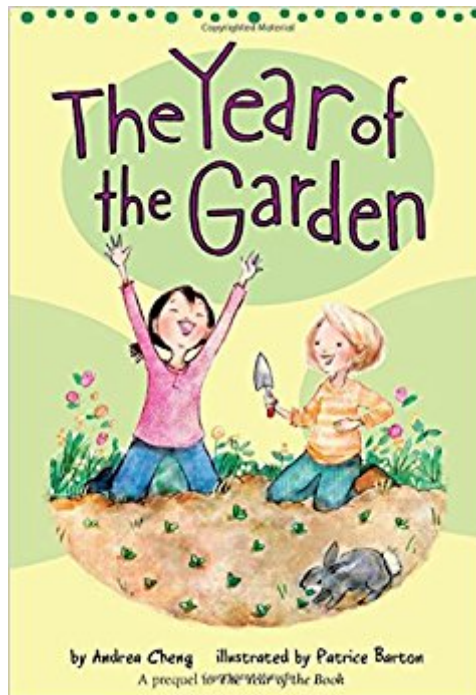




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# The Year Of The Garden (An Anna Wang Novel)



## Synopsis

When Anna is gifted a copy of *The Secret Garden*, it inspires her to follow her dreamsâ"maybe she can plant ivy and purple crocuses and the birds will come. Or maybe what grows from her dream of a garden is even better: friendship. And friendship, like a garden, often has a mind of its own."â  
â In this prequel to *The Year of the Book*, join Anna in a year of discovery, new beginnings, friendships, and growth.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 620 (What's this?)

Series: An Anna Wang novel (Book 5)

Hardcover: 128 pages

Publisher: HMH Books for Young Readers (April 11, 2017)

Language: English

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Product Dimensions: 5 x 0.6 x 7.2 inches

Shipping Weight: 8.5 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.3 out of 5 stars 17 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #762,556 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #55 in Books > Children's Books > Science, Nature & How It Works > Recycling & Green Living #372 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > Moving #866 in Books > Children's Books > Education & Reference > Science Studies > Nature > Environment

Age Range: 6 - 9 years

Grade Level: 1 - 4

## Customer Reviews

â... "Appealing both to transitional and fluent readers, this thoughtful prequel offers further insights into Anna's world for those returning to it, while creating a compelling story for those just discovering it." âSLJ, starred review "The parallels she draws between *The Secret Garden* and her experiences with Laura and the garden add depth to this thoughtful chronicle of adjustment. Delicate spot art highlights key elements. A gentle, feel-good story about the transforming power of friendship and gardening." âKirkus "Cheng has a keen ear for the friendship dynamics of the younger set... Barton's softly blended monochromatic illustrations match the delicacy of the text. Fans of Anna and Laura's adventures will enjoy seeing the beginning of the girls' friendship."

Andrea Cheng is the author of several children's books, including the acclaimed middle-grade Anna Wang series critics call "gentle," "accessible," and "just right." Though she passed away in 2015, her books will continue to inspire readers. Visit her website at [andreacheng.com](http://andreacheng.com). Patrice Barton's talents were discovered at age three, when she created a mural with a pastry brush and Crisco. She lives in Austin with her family. Visit her website at [patricebarton.com](http://patricebarton.com).

*The Year of the Garden* (An Anna Wang novel) For those of you who have read any of the previous Anna Wang books this one takes place before the others. In this one she is heading into 3rd grade and is going to celebrate turning 9. Yes you can read this one if you have never read any of the other books before because it is Anna before the other books. It is such a cute little story. This author really has a knack for bringing out the feelings of kids at this age. She writes in a way that makes kids feel like they are not the only ones going through these emotions. Anna faces things in this story in her world that are so relatable that kids in 2nd-4th grade might be feeling. Moving to a new house. Going to a new school. Finding new friends and figuring out how she fits in. Anna finds a new friend who also just recently moved in. They both will be going to the same school and this story is not only about their friendship and how it evolves but also Anna's friendship and respect for the adults in her life. I like that the characters in this book are not only trying to find their way with each other but also they have a good strong relationship with the adults in this book. There is an older couple that Anna's mom cleans their house on Saturdays. Often Anna goes with and this story talks about their bond and the things the couple share with her and her brother as they teach her things along the way. There is an implied sadness with the older couple and the wife being ill. But she does not pass away in the book just that she is getting ready for when the time comes around. That is why she gives Anna her favorite book from when she was little - *The Secret Garden*. I do not want to give too much away but just know it is a good clean heartfelt story. Perfect read for this age group. Nice easy chapters with a bit of cute art along the way to help hold the sometimes reluctant readers interest.

Sadly, *The Year of the Garden*, Andrea Cheng's posthumously published prequel to her four previous novels, may be the last of the Anna Wang's *The Year of the* stories. Anna's parents have moved the family to a new home. As a result, Anna will be attending a new school and having to make new friends. While Anna is reading *The Secret Garden*, her neighbor Laura interrupts her and introduces herself. The

girls discover the similarities in their lives and their mutual interest in gardening. Laura's interest in soccer challenges their growing friendship. However, when Anna discovers a baby rabbit in the garden and enlists Laura's help to save it, their friendship resumes and flourishes. Targeted at readers aged 6 to 9, in grades 1 to 4, *The Year of the Garden* involves girls in elementary school. This book is an excellent age-grade matching, the story was a simple one of friendship and of individual differences that younger readers will understand. Andrea Cheng brings the differences in culture and economic means into the story in such a way that they are both instructional and add to understanding the characters' actions. Her discussion of Anna's mother and her diligent study of the English language, as well as her work ethic, are an excellent way to teach young readers about the struggles immigrants face as they assimilate into American culture. Further, including the Shepherd's, an elderly couple for whom Anna's mother cleans, adds another dimension to the story. *The Year of the Garden* is a fun-to-read book that provides readers with a look at another culture and at the challenges faced by immigrants. It is an excellent representation of caring about and for the elderly; it highlights that they can teach younger generations much about their interests. The topics of environmentalism, recycling, and reusing are nicely woven into the story. The characters are charming and appeal to younger readers. I would recommend reading *The Year of the Garden* prior to reading Andrea Cheng's books in order to gain a better perspective on the characters and their situations. Further for the target group, reading this book after having read the others of the series may make the book and its lessons less interesting and important than they are.

*The Year of the Garden* is a prequel to *The Year of* series by Andrea Cheng, who passed away in 2015. This episode establishes the friendship between Anna Wang and Laura Morgan. Eight-year old Anna has just moved to a new home in Cincinnati, with her Chinese-American father and her Chinese immigrant mother. Anna and her brother Ken tag along when their mother goes to the Shepherd's house on Saturdays to clean and look after the elderly couple. Mrs. Shepherd gives Anna her old copy of *The Secret Garden* along with a bag full of seeds to plant her own garden. The next day while Anna reads the book under the honeysuckle bush in the yard, a girl named Laura stops by. Upon discovering that not only are they both new to the neighborhood but they are the same age and will be going to the same school, they become fast friends. But there are bumps along the way. When the girls clear a space in the backyard for their secret garden, Laura gets a bad case of poison ivy. After Anna refuses to join the

soccer team with Laura, she is jealous of Laura's friendship with her teammates and feels left out. The girls drift apart. Then one snowy day, Anna finds a baby bunny in the garden. Knowing that Laura has more experience with animals, Anna runs to her for help. Thanks to a bunny named Goo their friendship grows and their secret garden blooms. Cheng borrows from "The Secret Garden" theme of physical and emotional growth to show the budding friendship between Anna and Laura. By spotlighting Mrs. Wang's struggle to assimilate into American culture, Cheng gracefully introduces diversity and environmentalism. Barton's delicate pencil drawings in black and gray decorate this early chapter book while highlighting story details, which helps improve reading comprehension skills. "The Year of the Garden" is an engaging guidebook for growing a garden and cultivating a friendship.

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