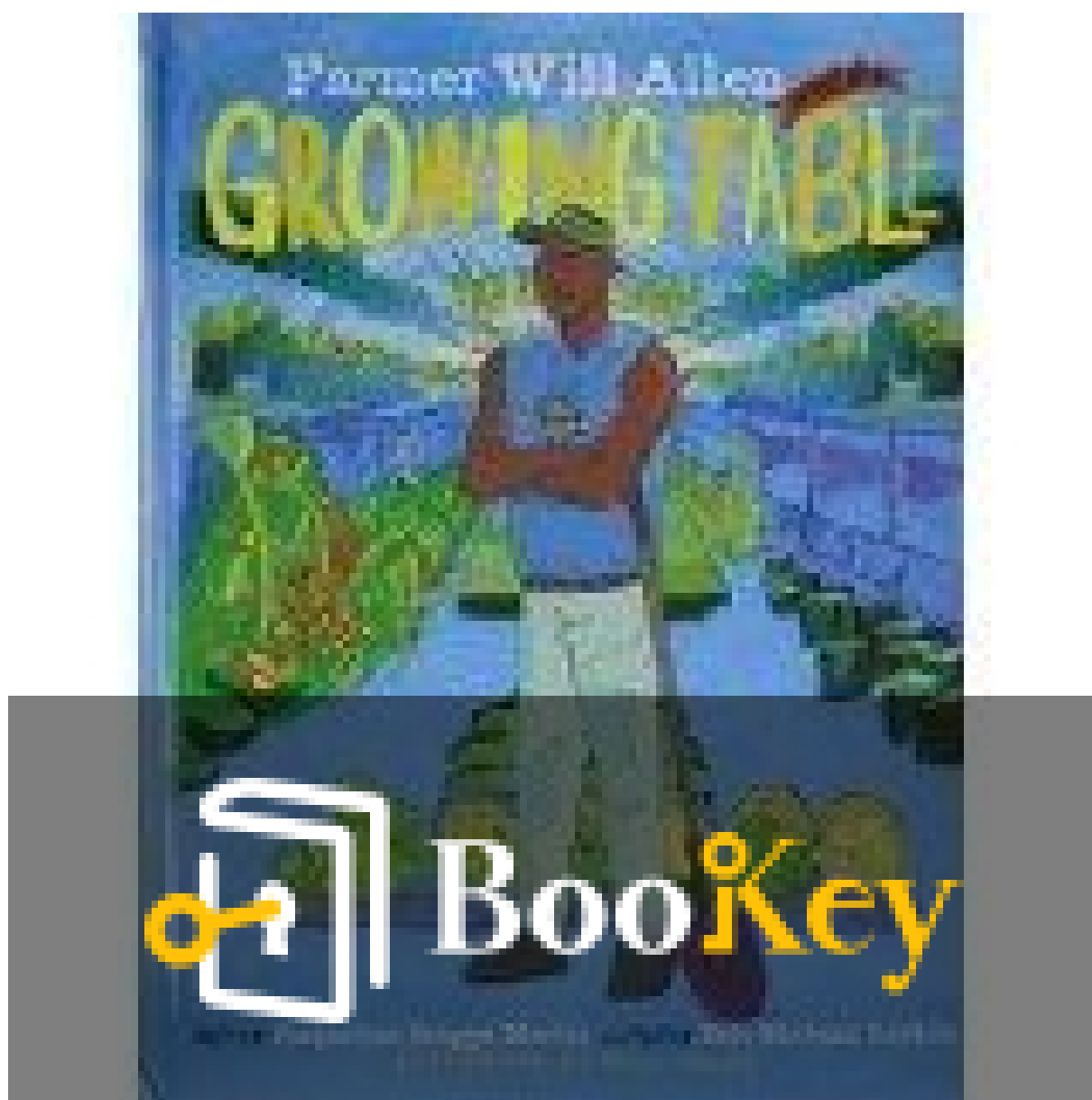


Farmer Will Allen And The Growing Table PDF (Limited Copy)

Jacqueline Briggs-Martin



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Farmer Will Allen And The Growing Table

Summary

Cultivating passion for sustainable farming and community.

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About the book

In "Farmer Will Allen And The Growing Table," Jacqueline Briggs-Martin weaves a compelling tale of resilience, innovation, and the transformative power of urban agriculture through the life of Will Allen, a former pro basketball player turned visionary farmer. Set against the backdrop of Milwaukee, this inspiring story invites readers into Allen's world, where he cultivates not only fresh vegetables but also hope and community by empowering those in need to grow their own food. As children and adults alike discover the joys of hands-on gardening and the significance of nurturing the land, they embark on a journey that revitalizes their health, their neighborhoods, and their futures. Join Will Allen on this remarkable adventure that celebrates the essence of food, growth, and the boundless possibilities that spring from the ground.

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About the author

Jacqueline Briggs-Martin is a celebrated author of children's literature, renowned for her engaging storytelling that blends real-life experiences with educational themes, particularly in the realms of nature, agriculture, and sustainability. With a passion for promoting awareness about environmental issues and the importance of healthy eating, Martin has penned numerous books that inspire young readers to appreciate the world around them. Her work is characterized by meticulous research and a compelling narrative style, enabling her to highlight the stories of influential figures, like farmer Will Allen, whose contributions to urban farming have reshaped communities. Through her writing, Briggs-Martin not only entertains but also empowers children to think critically about their food sources and the environment.

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Summary Content List

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chapter 1 Summary:

In the first chapter of "Farmer Will Allen and the Growing Table" by Jacqueline Briggs-Martin, we are introduced to the remarkable figure of Will Allen. Tall and robust, akin to the agricultural tools he wields, Will is depicted as a lively and engaging person who commands the attention of those around him with his warmth and charisma. The narrative reflects on his belief that everyone deserves access to nutritious food, a conviction that continues to guide his endeavors.

The chapter takes us back to Will's childhood, highlighting the central role food played in his family life. Meal times were significant occasions, with his mother preparing bountiful feasts, serving dishes such as peas, greens, and his favorite, lima beans with ham. These meals not only filled their bellies but also brought a sense of community, often welcoming visitors who would leave the table rejuvenated. Despite the absence of luxuries like a car or a television, the Allen family thrived on the wholesome food they grew themselves.

As a child, however, Will was ambivalent about the labor involved in farming. He envisioned a future away from the Maryland fields, dreaming instead of a life dedicated to basketball or a more conventional office job. Following his graduation, he pursued this dream by moving to Belgium to play professionally. It was there, while helping a friend with potato digging,



that Will felt a profound connection to the soil—a realization that reignited his passion for farming.

After concluding his basketball career, Will transitioned to a white-collar job in Wisconsin but continued to cultivate vegetables on his in-laws' land. His experiences in Belgium and the realization of the scarcity of fresh produce in urban areas fueled his desire to create a new kind of farm. Will was committed to the idea that everyone, no matter where they lived, should have access to healthy food. This vision laid the groundwork for what would become his life's work, inspiring him to turn abandoned urban spaces into thriving gardens, thus bringing nourishment and community back to the city.

Through the vivid portrayal of Will Allen's life, the chapter encapsulates his journey from a reluctant farmer to a passionate advocate for food accessibility, using his personal experiences as a catalyst for change in the urban food landscape.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: Access to nutritious food is a fundamental right.

Critical Interpretation: Imagine being part of a movement where you play a role in ensuring that everyone around you, regardless of their background or where they live, can enjoy healthy and nutritious meals. Will Allen's journey inspires you to see your power in addressing food inequality in your community. It encourages you to reflect on your own connection to food and the impacts of where it comes from. You might find yourself searching for ways to cultivate a garden, support local farms, or advocate for policies that champion food justice. The warmth and sense of community that Will fostered at his family table can be a model for you, reminding you that food is not just sustenance but a way to connect with others, share resources, and create a healthier, more equitable world.



chapter 2 Summary:

In the heart of Milwaukee, Will Allen, a determined farmer, seized an opportunity when he discovered a plot of land, the size of a supermarket, littered with abandoned greenhouses. Envisioning a vibrant community space where city kids could savor freshly harvested vegetables, Will purchased the neglected site. However, his excitement was quickly tempered by the realization that the soil was tainted with chemicals and pollution. Lacking the funds to replace the soil, he drew on his experiences from Belgium, where he learned the art of composting using food waste.

Determined to transform the "dirty" soil into a fertile foundation, Will enlisted the help of his friends to collect food scraps, ranging from apple peels to old zucchinis. He meticulously organized the scraps in large buckets, creating compost piles enriched with hay, leaves, newspapers, and the all-important red wiggler worms. These worms became integral to his composting process, efficiently breaking down the organic matter and transforming it into nutrient-rich soil. Throughout this journey, neighborhood children became curious about his efforts and eagerly joined him, learning about composting and the fascinating world of worms.

As time passed, Will and the kids diligently studied the dietary needs of the red wigglers, refining their composting strategy. They learned to avoid harmful substances while providing the worms with a diet that included



watermelon rinds and sweet potato scraps, ultimately realizing the value of worm "magic" in enhancing soil quality for crop growth.

With improved soil ready for planting, Will faced another hurdle: limited space on his urban lot. Refusing to be discouraged, he creatively utilized every available inch, utilizing vertical spaces by hanging plant baskets and growing vegetables in containers and stacked shelves. He introduced hoophouses to maximize planting capacity, extending the growing season and enabling him to cultivate a diverse array of vegetables.

Additionally, Will integrated aquaponics into his urban oasis, incorporating fish that provided nutrient-rich wastewater, which nourished his sprouts, while the plants, in turn, filtered the water for the fish. This innovative three-part ecosystem not only fostered a sustainable environment but also enriched the biodiversity of his project. To further diversify his urban farm, Will added goats, chickens, turkeys, and bees, creating a vibrant micro-farm he proudly named "Growing Power." Through his relentless innovation and community involvement, Will transformed a neglected plot of land into a flourishing farm, all while inspiring a new generation of gardeners and healthy eaters.

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Critical Thinking

Key Point: The power of resilience and community involvement in overcoming challenges.

Critical Interpretation: As you immerse yourself in Will Allen's journey, you realize that life's obstacles often feel daunting, much like the polluted soil he inherited. However, just like Will, you possess the ability to envision a brighter future even in dire circumstances. By gathering your resources and surrounding yourself with a supportive community, you can transform your challenges into opportunities for growth and innovation. His story illustrates that, with grit and collaboration, you can turn the 'dirty' aspects of your life into fertile soil for success and creativity, ultimately inspiring others as you cultivate a thriving environment around you.



chapter 3:

In chapter 3 of "Farmer Will Allen And The Growing Table," Will Allen, the protagonist, embodies the spirit of urban agriculture as he seeks to expand the reach of fresh food within city landscapes. He wears simple work clothes, but his ambitions are grand, aimed at creating a large-scale food source that benefits communities both locally and globally.

1. Will recognizes the limitations of individual farming and contemplates how to gather additional support to achieve his vision. Observing the diverse people around him—teenagers, families, and elders—he realizes that the potential for farming exists in the very heart of the city. His farm, affectionately referred to as his “table,” already yields thousands of pounds of produce, serving an array of customers from local residents to upscale restaurants. However, he aims for a more expansive vision: a table that spans continents, ensuring that healthy food is accessible to all.

2. To address the challenge of cultivating this world-sized table, Will shifts his strategy from being a singular farmer to one who empowers others. He travels extensively across the United States and internationally, sharing his

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Best Quotes from Farmer Will Allen And The Growing Table by Jacqueline Briggs-Martin with Page Numbers

chapter 1 | Quotes from pages 8-25

1. To all those who've ever planted a seed and watched it grow—farmers who tend food and flowers and tend the earth.
2. We never had a car or a TV, but we always had good food.
3. Will realized he 'loved digging in the dirt.'
4. Will believed everyone, everywhere, had a right to good food.
5. When he looked at an abandoned city lot and saw a huge table heaped with food, was he right?
6. He remembers people who'd come to dinner tired and drooped—and leave.
7. Will loved the food but hated the work.
8. He planned to quit on...leave those Maryland fields for basketball or white-shirt work.
9. When he talks, everyone listens.
10. When he laughs, everyone laughs, glad to be in his crew.

chapter 2 | Quotes from pages 26-40

1. One day, driving in Milwaukee, Will spotted six empty greenhouses on a plot of land about the size of a large supermarket, FOR SALE!
2. He could see kids, who'd never eaten a ripe tomato, never crunched a raw green bean, sitting at his table, eating his vegetables.



3. Will Allen bought that city lot!
4. He had no money for machines to dig out the bad soil, for truckloads of good soil.
5. In Belgium, Will had learned to make good soil with food garbage. They called it composting.
6. He added hay, leaves, newspapers, red wiggler water.
7. Will told them about the piles and the red wiggler worms that would help the garbage become compost.
8. Will says worm 'magic' is what makes his farm grow.
9. He grew greens in buckets, greens in rows.
10. Will added goats, chickens, turkeys, and bees to that city farm he named 'Growing Power.'

chapter 3 | Quotes from pages 26-59

1. Will wanted his table to feed folks all over the world.
2. I would teach people to grow food for their own tables.
3. We need fifty million more people growing food on porches, in pots, in side yards.
4. Will Allen dreams of a day when city farms are as common as streetlights.
5. When he sees kids, he sees farmers.
6. How big will your table be?
7. I like to farm in all sorts of places.
8. You are the key to helping people, at home and around the world, have better, safer and healthier food to eat.
9. By planting your own small garden anywhere.



10. The secret to being a great farmer is great soil to farm in.

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Farmer Will Allen And The Growing Table Discussion Questions

chapter 1 | | Q&A

1.Question:

What is the physical description of Will Allen as introduced in the chapter?

Will Allen is described as being as tall as his truck, which suggests he is a very tall person. He has the strength to hold either a cabbage or a basketball in one hand. His presence is impactful, as when he laughs, everyone around him laughs too, showing he is a source of joy and camaraderie.

2.Question:

What kinds of food did Will Allen's family serve at the kitchen table during his childhood?

Will Allen recalls that his kitchen table was often filled with bowls of peas, greens, and his favorite dish: lima beans with ham. His mother prepared enough food for thirty people, indicating a strong tradition of hospitality and family meals centered around fresh, home-cooked food.

3.Question:

How did Will's early experiences with food influence his later views on farming and access to good food?

While Will loved the food his family grew, he initially disliked the hard work of farming and dreamt of pursuing a career in basketball or other 'white-shirt' jobs. However, his experiences in Belgium, where he helped dig potatoes, reignited his



passion for working with the earth. This led him to believe in the importance of fresh food access for everyone, which shaped his later endeavors in urban farming.

4.Question:

What led Will Allen to realize that he wanted to pursue farming?

After his basketball career and working in a white-collar job in Wisconsin, Will began growing vegetables on the land of his wife Cyndy's parents. However, it was witnessing the scarcity of fresh vegetables in urban areas that sparked his understanding of the need for local food sources. This realization added to his belief that everyone deserves access to good food.

5.Question:

What overarching theme can be inferred from the chapter regarding Will Allen's journey?

The overarching theme of the chapter highlights the connection between food, community, and individual purpose. It demonstrates how Will Allen's childhood experiences with food, love for family meals, and later insights about food scarcity in cities shaped his mission to provide fresh, healthy food to all, showing the transformative power of nurturing both soil and community.

chapter 2 | | Q&A

1.Question:

What inspired Will Allen to buy the plot of land with empty greenhouses?

Will Allen was inspired to buy the plot of land after spotting six empty greenhouses

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while driving in Milwaukee. He envisioned children, who had never experienced the taste of fresh vegetables like ripe tomatoes and raw green beans, sitting at his table enjoying the produce he could grow there. This vision motivated him to invest in the city lot.

2.Question:

What challenges did Will Allen face with the soil on his newly acquired land?

Will found that the soil on his newly acquired land was 'dirty', contaminated with chemicals and pollution. This posed a significant challenge because he lacked the funds necessary to purchase machines that could dig out the bad soil or to buy truckloads of clean soil to replace it. This predicament left him with an empty table despite having the land.

3.Question:

How did Will Allen go about creating good soil for his farm?

Will used his knowledge from Belgium about composting to improve the quality of the soil. He needed a significant amount of food waste to create compost, so he asked friends to save their food scraps, including apple peels and old zucchinis. He collected this waste in large white buckets and created compost piles, adding materials such as hay, leaves, newspapers, and red wiggler worms. By turning the piles to aerate them, he involved neighborhood kids in the process, educating them about composting and maintaining a sustainable farming environment.

4.Question:

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What did Will learn about feeding red wiggler worms and how did it impact his composting efforts?

After studying worms for five years, Will learned important lessons about how to feed red wiggler worms. He discovered that certain foods, specifically hot peppers, onions, and garlic, were not suitable for the worms, while they thrived on sweeter scraps like watermelon rinds and sweet potato leftovers. This knowledge allowed him to optimize his composting efforts and ensure that the worms contributed effectively to soil quality, which Will referred to as worm 'magic' that helped his farm thrive.

5.Question:

How did Will Allen expand the growing space in his small city plot and what features did he add to support his farming efforts?

To maximize the limited space on his small city plot, Will Allen utilized vertical farming techniques and other innovative methods. He hung plant baskets from the ceilings of the greenhouses, grew vegetables in buckets and rows, and filled shelves with pots of spinach, chard, and lettuce. He also constructed hoophouses to create more growing space and incorporated fish tanks into his greenhouse setup, using fish wastewater to fertilize the plants. Additionally, he introduced goats, chickens, turkeys, and bees into his farming system, collectively enriching his operation, which he named 'Growing Power'.

chapter 3 | | Q&A

1.Question:

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What attire does Will Allen typically wear while working on his farm?

Will Allen usually wears jeans and a blue sweatshirt with cutoff sleeves while he is busy working on his farm from early morning to night.

2.Question:

How does Will Allen envision expanding local food production, especially in urban areas?

Will Allen believes that to expand local food production, more individuals need to be involved in farming. He encourages people from various backgrounds, such as teenagers, parents, and grandparents, to learn how to grow food. His vision is for fifty million more people to engage in urban agriculture, utilizing spaces like porches, pots, and side yards to contribute towards a larger community table.

3.Question:

What impact did Will Allen aim for with his traveling and sharing knowledge about farming?

Will Allen aimed to inspire and educate people across the United States and around the world on how to farm in urban settings. By showing them methods for growing food, he sought to facilitate self-sufficiency and improve access to healthy produce, thereby expanding the concept of food farming beyond rural areas to city environments.

4.Question:

What are some innovative farming ideas that Will Allen has proposed

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for increasing food production?

Will Allen has proposed various innovative farming ideas, such as establishing schoolyard plots, creating vertical farms that are five stories high, and utilizing empty factories or warehouses for agricultural purposes. He envisions a future where urban farms are as common as streetlights, thereby integrating food production into urban life.

5.Question:

In the afterword, what key points does Will Allen emphasize for young readers about engaging with farming and healthy eating?

In the afterword, Will Allen emphasizes that readers can actively participate in improving food quality by: 1) eating fresh vegetables and fruits, 2) planting their own small gardens in various locations (such as backyards, porches, or even indoors), and 3) starting a worm factory to enhance soil quality through composting. He encourages youth to be proactive in growing food for themselves and their families as a means of contributing to health and self-sufficiency.





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