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# Miss Bridie Chose a Shovel

Laura Wadley

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Connor, Leslie. *Miss Bridie Chose a Shovel*. Illustrated by Mary Azarian. Houghton Mifflin, 2004. ISBN 0618305645. \$16.00. 30 pp.

Reviewer: Laura Wadley

Reading Level: All

Rating: Outstanding

Genre: Historical fiction;

Subject: Self-Reliance-Juvenile fiction; Shovels-Juvenile fiction;

*Miss Bridie Chose a Shovel* is reminiscent of Barbara Cooney's *Miss Rumphius* and the Buehners' *Fanny* in the romance of Miss Bridie's practicality and certitude. Miss Bridie "could have picked a chiming clock or a porcelain figurine" when she left her home for America, but she chose a shovel instead. She used the shovel to make her fortune spading out a garden and selling seedlings, digging out a path to the skating pond where she met her husband, and shoveling coal into the cook stove to bake bread for her family. Miss Bridie shapes her American dream one shovelful at a time, and a beautiful dream it is, illustrated in Azarian's signature American pastoral mode. *Miss Bridie Chose a Shovel* is a beautiful book in both text and pictures, a compact but powerful example of Edgar Lee Masters' *Lucinda Matlock*: "It takes life to love life."