



2008

Alive and Well in Prague, New York

Larysa Bordner

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Grab, Daphne. *Alive and Well in Prague, New York*. HarperTeen, 2008. ISBN 9780061256707. \$16.99. 247 p.

Reviewer: Larysa Bordner

Reading Level: Young adult

Rating: Excellent

Genre: Contemporary realistic fiction;

Subject: Parkinson's disease--Juvenile fiction; Fathers and daughters--Juvenile fiction; High school--Juvenile fiction; Books--Reviews;

Matisse Osgood grew up in New York City, and she loves it there! However, after her father learns that he has Parkinson's Disease, and his condition starts to worsen, her parents decide that a slower life in the country might be more appropriate for their family. They move to Prague, New York, but things are not quite as simple as they hoped. Matisse, along with her parents, tries to ignore the changes that have come into her life. It becomes clear, that ignoring the situation is not effective, and so each member of the family finds his/her own way of coping. Matisse learns that emotions must be understood rather than discarded and how to truly be happy instead of wearing a façade to cope with difficult changes.

Alive and Well in Prague, New York is a poignant story about the realities of life. The writing is simple and easy to follow. The book is told only from Matisse's point of view, but each of the characters is well developed and represented. Parts of the story seem to drag as Matisse works through her problems, but the foreshadowing and hope of resolution keep the plot flowing. This is an uplifting example for adolescents of how to deal with sickness, moving to a new place, and discovering one's self.

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