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A Year Down Yonder

Sydnee Burr

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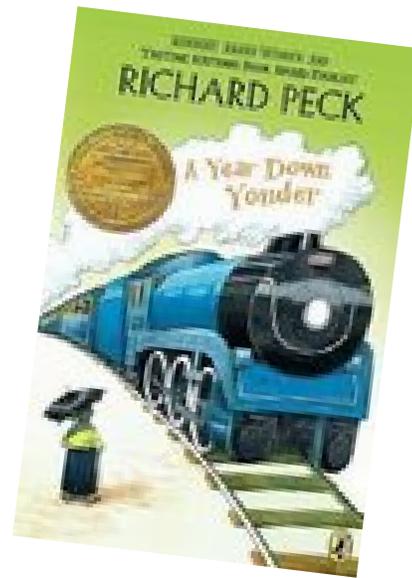
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Book Review

Title: A Year Down Yonder
Author: Richard Peck
Reviewer: Sydnee Burr
Publisher: Puffin Books
Year: 2002
ISBN: 9780142300701
Pages: 160
Interest Level: Intermediate
Rating: Outstanding



Review

The Great Depression has ended, but the ripples of its effects are far from over. Unable to feed their whole family, Mary Alice's parents are forced to split their family apart and farm their children out to relatives. Arriving at the train depot, Mary Alice is greeted by her disgruntled and rough Grandma who will be her caretaker for a foreseeable future. Adjusting to an old house, a country life, a tiny school house, and small town ways is no easy feat. Eventually Mary Alice is charmed by her new life, makes friends, and discovers the sweet side of her Grandma. The greatest lesson Mary Alice learns from her Grandmother is the importance and duty of caring for the overlooked and forgotten.

Richard Peck creates a completely believable character in Mary Alice and her adventures. Her insecurities become the reader's insecurities, her triumphs become the reader's triumphs, and her life lessons become the reader's life lessons. This book is an exceptionally appropriate selection for middle school reading groups or individual student's silent reading periods. Students will find joy and excitement as they engross themselves in Mary Alice's experiences and relate to Mary Alice, her peers, and even her home life. There is much to be gained by the quick read of A Year Down Yonder for students, parents, and teachers alike.