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A Coal Miner's Bride: the Diary of Anetka Kaminska

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Book Review

Title: A Coal Miner's Bride: the Diary of Anetka Kaminska

Author: Susan Campbell Bartoletti

Reviewer: Liz Sugihara

Publisher: Scholastic Inc.

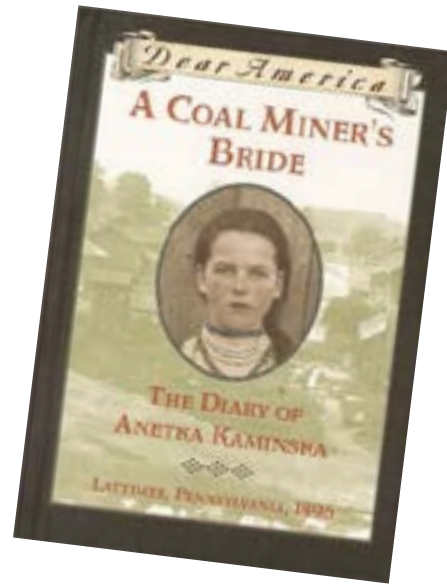
Year: 2000

ISBN: 9780439053860

Pages: 221

Interest Level: Primary, Intermediate

Rating: Outstanding



Review

Thirteen-year-old Anetka Kaminska lives in Poland during a politically tumultuous time. Her father, who has found work as a coal miner in America, sends for Anetka and the rest of her family. Unfortunately for Anetka, her father traded her hand in marriage for the ship's passage. The story, told from Anetka's perspective, follows her as she leaves her village, travels to America, and meets her new husband. Her story is filled with the hardships of being a coal miner's wife and the struggles that immigrants experience in seeking equal treatment during a time when foreigners were looked down upon.

Though fictional, the book offers an insightful look into the world of an immigrant girl living in the late 1800s in America. Since it is written as if Anetka is writing a diary, the format of the story may be odd to those who are not used to it. The story starts and ends fairly abruptly and there is no climax, but the epilogue does give readers closure. Though written for a younger audience, Anetka suffers many hardships that may be difficult to relate to. However, she does yearn for independence and true love, two things that most girls also desire. As a nice addition, the book also includes a section in the back that offers historical context and actual photographs of people living during this time. Overall, this book would definitely benefit any collection or classroom.