



Orphan Train Girl

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Book Review

Orphan Train Girl

Author

Christine Baker Kline

Illustrator

Reviewer

Cynthia Frazier

Rating

Outstanding

Level

Intermediate, Young
Adult

Pages

228

Year

2017

Publisher

HarperCollins Publishers

ISBN

9780062414342

What does a twelve-year-old Penobscot Indian have in common with a wealthy ninety-one-year-old woman? At first it seems that they are worlds apart. Molly Ayer, through assigned community service hours, helps Vivian Daly clean out her attic. The upper story of the big house is full of junk and Vivian doesn't want to throw anything away. Instead stories of her childhood unfold as she discovers forgotten mementos long packed away in boxes. Molly finds that Vivian became an orphan too not long after emigrating from Ireland. Vivian had been assigned to a train filled with orphans that traveled to homes in the Midwest where people would take children to work on their farms, help with their children, or work in a business. Vivian's story was long ago, but in a way it parallels Molly's who had been in the foster care system for four years, moving from family to family never really feeling that she belonged. Molly finds in Vivian understanding and kindness. Vivian is helped through Molly's computer skills to solve the mystery of the family she thought was lost forever.

Kline is the author of many articles, reviews and essays and has been published in the New York Times, More, Psychology Today, the San Francisco Chronicle and Money Magazine. She has written seven novels. Orphan Train Girl is a Young Reader's Edition of her adult novel Orphan Train which was a New York Times number one best seller for five weeks and remained on the list for two years. Orphan Train Girl is suitable for middle school to adult readers and contains no objectionable material. It engenders questions about the practice of orphan trains in United States history, relationships, foster care, prejudice, and the role modern technology can play in defining the past. Two orphans, one old and one young, tell their stories to each other and find they have much in common. Mother/daughter or teacher/class discussions would be appropriate upon reading this book.