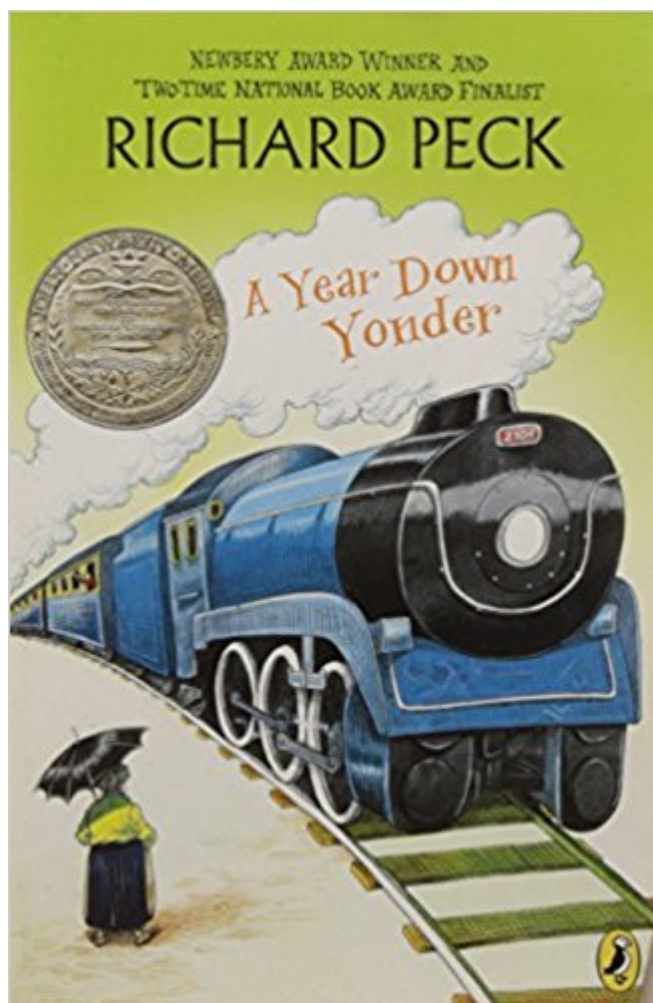


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# A Year Down Yonder



## Synopsis

A Newbery Medal Winner Richard Peck's Newbery Medal-winning sequel to *A Long Way from Chicago* Mary Alice's childhood summers in Grandma Dowdel's sleepy Illinois town were packed with enough drama to fill the double bill of any picture show. But now she is fifteen, and faces a whole long year with Grandma, a woman well known for shaking up her neighbors--and everyone else! All Mary Alice can know for certain is this: when trying to predict how life with Grandma might turn out . . . better not. This wry, delightful sequel to the Newbery Honor Book *A Long Way from Chicago* has already taken its place among the classics of children's literature. "Hilarious and poignant." *Publishers Weekly*, starred review A Newbery Medal Winner A New York Times Bestseller An ALA Notable Book An ALA Best Book for Young Adults A Booklist *Best Book of the Year* A School Library Journal *Best Book of the Year*

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: 0610 (What's this?)

Paperback: 160 pages

Publisher: Puffin Books; Reprint edition (November 21, 2002)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0142300705

Product Dimensions: 5.1 x 0.4 x 7.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 4.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 297 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #26,687 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #50 in *Books > Children's Books > Literature & Fiction > Historical Fiction > United States > 1900s* #435 in *Books > Children's Books > Classics* #1596 in *Books > Romance > Historical*

Age Range: 8 - 12 years

Grade Level: 3 - 7

## Customer Reviews

Grandma Dowdel's back! She's just as feisty and terrifying and goodhearted as she was in Richard Peck's *A Long Way from Chicago*, and every bit as funny. In the first book, a Newbery Honor winner, Grandma's rampages were seen through the eyes of her grandson Joey, who, with his sister, Mary Alice, was sent down from Chicago for a week every summer to visit. But now it's 1937 and Joey has gone off to work for the Civilian Conservation Corps, while 15-year-old Mary Alice has to go stay with Grandma alone--for a whole year, maybe longer. From the very first moment when

she arrives at the depot clutching her Philco portable radio and her cat, Bootsie, Mary Alice knows it won't be easy. And it's not. She has to sleep alone in the attic, attend a hick town school where in spite of her worn-out coat she's "the rich girl from Chicago," and be an accomplice in Grandma's outrageous schemes to run the town her own way--and do good while nobody's looking. But being Grandma's sidekick is always interesting, and by the end of the year, Mary Alice has grown to see the formidable love in the heart of her formidable Grandma. Peck is at his best with these hilarious stories that rest solidly within the American literary tradition of Mark Twain and Bret Harte. Teachers will cherish them as great read-alouds, and older teens will gain historical perspective from this lively picture of the depression years in small-town America. (Ages 12 and older) --Patty Campbell --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

In this Newbery Honor book, Chicago-bred Mary Alice has been sentenced to a year-long stay in rural Illinois with her irrepressible, rough and gruff grandmother. Soon, however, she becomes Grandma's partner in crime, helping to carry out madcap schemes to benefit friends and avenge enemies. In a starred review, PW called this sequel to *A Long Way to Chicago* "hilarious and poignant." Ages 10-14. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc.

I purchased this book with my mother in mind who grew up in Sunfield, IL. during the depression. It's the story of a young city girl who goes to live with her eccentric grandmother in southern Illinois when times get tough for her parents up in Chicago. The adventures of grand daughter and grandmother are delightful! The grandmother is a real character who makes a habit out of "borrowing" pecans in the middle of the night from a neighbor. Filled with small town humor, you become totally immersed in this young girls life as she grows into a young woman. It also touched me because at the time I purchased the book, we--along with the rest of the country were going through financial hardships of our own. It helped me to face those hardships with hope and humor. Loved the book.

The book is about life during the depression and recession years. The protagonist , Mary Alice, is 15 and needs to leave her parents in Chicago and move to her grandma's house in a little town. She grows into adulthood with her grandma. Grandma has a personal and unsuspecting way to solve different situations. The author did a very good job in describing the dynamics of the characters and keeps the reader's attention constant to the plot. The author illustrates and solves problems through short shores. The actions are unexpected and many times funny. All the plots in the book keep the

attention of the reader. The story gives opportunities for the reader to analyze many different relationships and to think about life, losses, self defense, helpfulness and love. The book is intended for teenagers but I recommend it also for adults. This book shows how people's problems can be solved in different ways.

This is a coming-of-age story, of course, and I agree that parts of it are very funny. But Richard Peck knows young readers are capable of looking closely at complicated, real people. The grandmother loves this child and shows it often even though there is no money to spare. She is a creative woman, not too bothered with who owns what (like the pecans and pumpkins), but she puts these ingredients to use by "saving" the Halloween feast and serving up the bounty to the whole town, all for Mary Alice. She is, also, a wholly honest person, not suffering fools easily. Her bringing together the two sisters at the DAR meeting is a perfect coup which serves to level out the social tiers of the town. (Every town needs a Grandma Dowdel to tell them the truth about themselves!) The scene that brought me to my knees and brought tears to my eyes was the aftermath of the turkey shoot when Grandma and Mary Alice go upstairs to visit with Mrs. Abernathy's son--or what is left of him after his being gassed in World War I. "The trenches are all filled in, but the boys are still dying." Do the other reviewers think this is a hilarious scene? Surely the young readers will see the poignancy of this pitiful waste of the boy's life. The scenes where Grandma and Mary Alice are working the snowy trap line to gather the fox pelts are not hilarious either. Later we find that it is the only way Grandma can be sure to have the money for Joey to come to see his sister, and the only way to buy Mary Alice new clothes. (And I must say her sacrifice and tenacity does remind me of my own grandmother.) These people are not just eccentric entertainment. We must see their depth. It's a lovely book; it's a book about love. If someone read it, and was just bowled over by mere hilarity, it's time to read it again.

Sweet tale of a young girl's experience living in the country and learning about her grandmother. Middle school and upper elementary girls will enjoy this book.

Book was purchased for grandson,

If you need a real, honest to goodness laugh, read *A Year Down Yonder*. I'm 56 and never too old for fun kiddie lit. This story and its companion story -- *A Long Way from Chicago* are charming, funny reads that are sure to bring a smile to your face and a laugh to your day. I love the stories

about Grandma. She is some kind of amazing old gal. I wish I'd had a grandma just like her. I read these stories to my kids -- and I hope to one day read them to my grandkids. I remember hearing my boys laughing as we'd read them at bedtime. Priceless.

A great story that's uplifting but also realistic. A great way for kids to learn about some of the harder times our country has faced. I read to a 7, 11, and 14 year old and all 3 enjoyed it!

A Year Down Yonder by Richard Peck, very enjoyable read for grand kid.

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