



A Year Down Yonder

By Richard Peck

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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

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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



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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

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

From Publishers Weekly

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.

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From School Library Journal

Grade 5-8-Peck charms readers once again with this entertaining sequel to *A Long Way from Chicago* (Dial, 1998). This time, 15-year-old Mary Alice visits Grandma Dowdel alone for a one-year stay, while her parents struggle through the recession of 1937 looking for jobs and better housing. With her older brother, Joey, working out west in a government program, Mary Alice takes a turn at recounting memorable and pivotal moments of her year with Grandma. Beneath the woman's fierce independence and nonconformity, Mary Alice discovers compassion, humor, and intuition. She watches her grandmother exact the perfect revenge on a classmate who bullies her on the first day of school, and she witnesses her "shameless" tactics to solicit donations from Veteran's Day "burgoo" eaters whose contributions are given to Mrs. Abernathy's blind, paralyzed, war-veteran son. From her energetic, eccentric, but devoted Grandma, she learns not only how to cook but also how to deal honestly and fairly with people. At story's end, Mary Alice returns several years later to wed the soldier, Royce McNabb, who was her classmate during the year spent with Grandma. Again, Peck has created a delightful, insightful tale that resounds with a storyteller's wit, humor, and vivid description. Mary Alice's memories capture the atmosphere, attitudes, and lifestyle of the times while shedding light on human strengths and weaknesses.

Gerry Larson, Durham School of the Arts, NC

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