

# A YEAR DOWN YONDER

# LIVING LITERATURE SERIES

RICHARD PECK

A PERMA-BOUND PRODUCTION

TEACHER'S GUIDE

GUIDE WRITTEN BY MARY ELLEN SNODGRASS

*This guide was prepared using the Dial Books for Young Readers edition, © 2000. Other editions may differ.*

## SYNOPSIS

**Prologue:** In September 1937, Mary Alice Dowdel leaves Dearborn Station in Chicago on the way south to Grandma Dowdel's home in Piatt County. Her parents have given up their apartment and moved into a single room after Dad lost his job. Joey Dowdel works out west planting trees for the Civilian Conservation Corps.

**Rich Chicago Girl:** Aboard the Wabash Railroad's Blue Bird, Mary Alice carries her cat Bootsie in a picnic basket and clutches a portable Philco radio. After two years' absence, she knows what to expect from her grandmother, who hands out few compliments or words of encouragement. Grandma immediately escorts Mary Alice to high school, which started two weeks earlier.

The principal, Mr. August Fluke, doubles as janitor, coach, and shop teacher. Many boys have dropped out to work on farms. Mary Alice shares a desk with Mildred Burdick, who criticizes Mary Alice for her home-made dress, calls her "rich Chicago girl," and tries to extort a dollar. Mildred rides her horse to Grandma's house and waits for the dollar.

Grandma treats Mildred to buttermilk and corn bread with jam and asks about Grandma Idella, who has dropsy, and Mr. Burdick, who is in prison. After Grandma releases Mildred's horse with her boots tied around its neck, Mary Alice learns that the horse was stolen and that Mildred will have to walk home barefoot for five miles. Grandma reports that she buttered Bootsie's paws to make her stay in the storage house.

**Vittles and Vengeance:** In preparation for Halloween, town pranksters begin stealing privies at Columbus Day. Mr. Fluke asks parents to send refreshments for the school party. Grandma boils glue and awaits privy thieves with wire strung over the path. She dumps glue on an unidentified prowler and keeps the knife, saw, and a sack of flour he and his confederates drop as they flee.

The next night, Grandma and Mary Alice take the wagon to Mr. Nyquist's yard to gather pecans. There are so few that Grandma fastens a tire to the tractor and drives it against the pecan tree to knock down more nuts. They steal pumpkins from the Pensingers. On Saturday morning, she and Mary Alice make pecan and pumpkin pies. At the party, Grandma serves pie and casually hands the prankster's knife to Mr. Fluke, who identifies it as belonging to his son, Augie, Jr.

**A Minute in the Morning:** At night, Mary Alice listens to the radio. In November on Armistice Day, she complains about her cold room. Grandma takes her to a turkey shoot at the Abernathy farm and helps the Ladies' Auxillary of the American Legion stir up burgoo. At 11:00 A. M., shooters halt to pay tribute to the 1918 armistice that ended World War I. Instead of one regular price for the burgoo, Grandma charges people what she thinks they can afford. The pro-

ceeds go to Mrs. Abernathy for her invalid son, who was blinded by poison gas during the war.

**Away in a Manger:** At Christmas, students make gifts in home ec. and prepare for the annual nativity pageant. Grandma forages for walnut hulls and takes Mary Alice to the Cowgills' farm to trap foxes, which she skins for their valuable pelts. Grandma and Mary Alice harvest spruce and a fir tree for decorations. Grandma adds fox fur to Mary Alice's coat to lengthen the sleeves. Mary Alice realizes that her grandmother works hard for cash.

Grandma makes a star-spangled halo from wire and tin cans for Mary Alice to wear in the pageant as the Virgin Mary. The program halts at the discovery of a newborn child in the manger. Grandma identifies it as Mildred Burdick's baby. Mary Alice recognizes a tall man in the audience as Joey, whom Grandma had sent a ticket. She sends the children home for Christmas.

**Hearts and Flour:** Mary Alice begins writing an anonymous column for the *Piatt County Call*. Mrs. Weidenbach orders Grandma to make cherry tarts for the DAR's Washington's Birthday tea. Mary Alice encounters a new boy, Royce McNabb, from Mattoon in Coles County. When Mrs. Weidenbach returns to force the issue about the tarts, Grandma announces that the DAR will have the tea at her house. At school, Ina-Rae, an unpopular girl, receives valentines from three male classmates, including Royce.

At 4:00 P. M. on Washington's Birthday, Grandma lays out the cherry tarts and punch laced with bourbon. Dressed in pearls and a new maroon dress with lace handkerchief, she awaits the guests. In addition to the snobs in the DAR, she invites Effie Wilcox and Aunt Mae Griswold. The snobs are appalled that non-members come to the tea. To the self-important Mrs. Weidenbach, Effie identifies herself as her sister. The two were separated in 1883 when the county put them in foster homes. Mary Alice tweaks the DAR with a comment on the tea in the *Piatt County Call*.

**A Dangerous Man:** In March, things improve for Mary Alice. Bootsie gives birth to a kitten; Mother sends a dollar for Mary Alice's 16th birthday. On the advice of postmaster Maxine Patch, Arnold Green, a New York muralist working for the WPA, asks to rent a room. Grandma welcomes him and pockets the rent in cash. Arnold paints in the attic. Mary Alice asks Royce to come study with her on Sunday afternoon.

When Royce arrives, there is a scream in the attic. Grandma grabs her Winchester shotgun. Maxine, who has been posing for Green, runs naked through the house with a black snake coiled around her. Afterward, Arnold nails the attic shut and paints in his room. When Maxine tries to get a marriage proposal from Arnold, Grandma introduces him to Miss Butler, Mary Alice's teacher.

**Gone with the Wind:** In summer, Mary Alice receives letters from her parents and post cards from Joey mailed from Fort Peck and the Great Salt Lake. Shortly before graduation,

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students scurry to a shelter during a tornado. Worried about Grandma, Mary Alice races home and finds her grandmother nestling Bootsie and April in the basement. Mary Alice and Grandma rescue Mr. Nyquist from fallen plaster and check on Effie Wilcox, whose privy disappeared in the storm.

Grandma initiates spring cleaning. At the school party, Royce sits with Mary Alice on the hayride and intends to write her from the University of Illinois. Mary Alice doesn't want to return to Chicago, but Grandma pretends to need her room for boarders.

**Ever After:** In 1945, Mary Alice marries Royce at Grandma's house. Her parents, who have moved to Seattle, and Joey, a pilot over Germany near the end of World War II, can't attend the wedding. Mary Alice, who works for the Chicago *Tribune* as a reporter, carries a nosegay of flowers that Grandma made. Grandma gives the bride away.

### TIME LINE

- 1847** The Chicago *Tribune* is established.  
**1880** The Daughters of the American Revolution is founded.  
**1883** Effie Wilcox and Wilma Weidenbach are put in foster homes.  
**1885** **April** Annie Oakley joins "Buffalo Bill" Cody's Wild West Show.  
**1914** **July** World War I begins.  
**1918** **Nov. 11** Armistice ends World War I.  
**1920** Joey Dowdel is born.  
**1922** **March** Mary Alice Dowdel is born.  
**1929** **Feb. 14** Al Capone's men, dressed as policemen, gun down seven rival gang members in Chicago.  
**Oct. 24** The Stock Market crash precipitates the Great Depression.  
**1931** Al Capone goes to prison for tax evasion.  
**1933** Sally Rand performs a scandalous fan dance in Chicago at the Century of Progress Exposition.  
**1934** **Oct. 22** Police gun down Pretty Boy Floyd in a field near East Liverpool, Ohio.  
**1937** **July 2** Amelia Earhart vanishes near Howland Island in the central Pacific Ocean.  
**September** Mary Alice Dowdel leaves Chicago to live with her Grandma Dowdel in Piatt County.  
**1941** **Dec. 7** The Japanese attack Pearl Harbor, Hawaii; the United States enters World War II.  
**1945** Mary Alice marries Royce at Grandma's house.

### AUTHOR SKETCH

Richard Wayne Peck and his popular fiction have remained close to his Midwestern roots. Born April 5, 1934, in Decatur, Illinois, he was the son of dietitian Virginia Gray and Wayne Morris Peck, a merchant. He credits his mother's reading to him with initiating a love of writing. He nurtured the creative urge with hours of radio broadcasts, which he expanded into mental pictures of plots and characters. After a positive, encouraging grade school education, which included Latin courses, he studied for a year at Exeter University and attended DePauw University on scholarship. Military service preceded attendance at Southern Illinois University, where he served on the English faculty as an instructor.

Before settling on a career in fiction, Peck ghost-wrote sermons for army chaplains and taught high school English at Glenbrook North High School in Northbrook, Illinois, but left the classroom discouraged by teen problems. After a stint teaching in a New York City junior high school and editing

textbooks for Scott, Foresman plus post-graduate work at Washington University, he set out to write fiction for young readers. As a professional, he learned from other contemporary writers for youth, especially the realism of Robert Cormier and the craft of Chris Crutcher.

In addition to major works of fiction, Peck has edited poetry anthologies and has written and edited poems and articles for *Saturday Review of Literature* and the *Chicago Tribune*. He produced an architecture column for the *New York Times* and articles for *American Libraries*, *PTA*, and *Parents* plus short stories, essay compendia, and adults' and children's books. He has lectured on cruise ships and at Oxford University and regularly addresses professional conferences and visits with readers in schools and libraries. "The Ghost Belonged to Me" was the source of a teleplay, "Child of Glass," presented in 1977 on *The Wonderful World of Disney*. Peck donated his private papers and manuscripts to the library of the University of Southern Mississippi as part of the de Grummond Children's Literature Collection, one of North America's leading research centers in the field of children's literature.

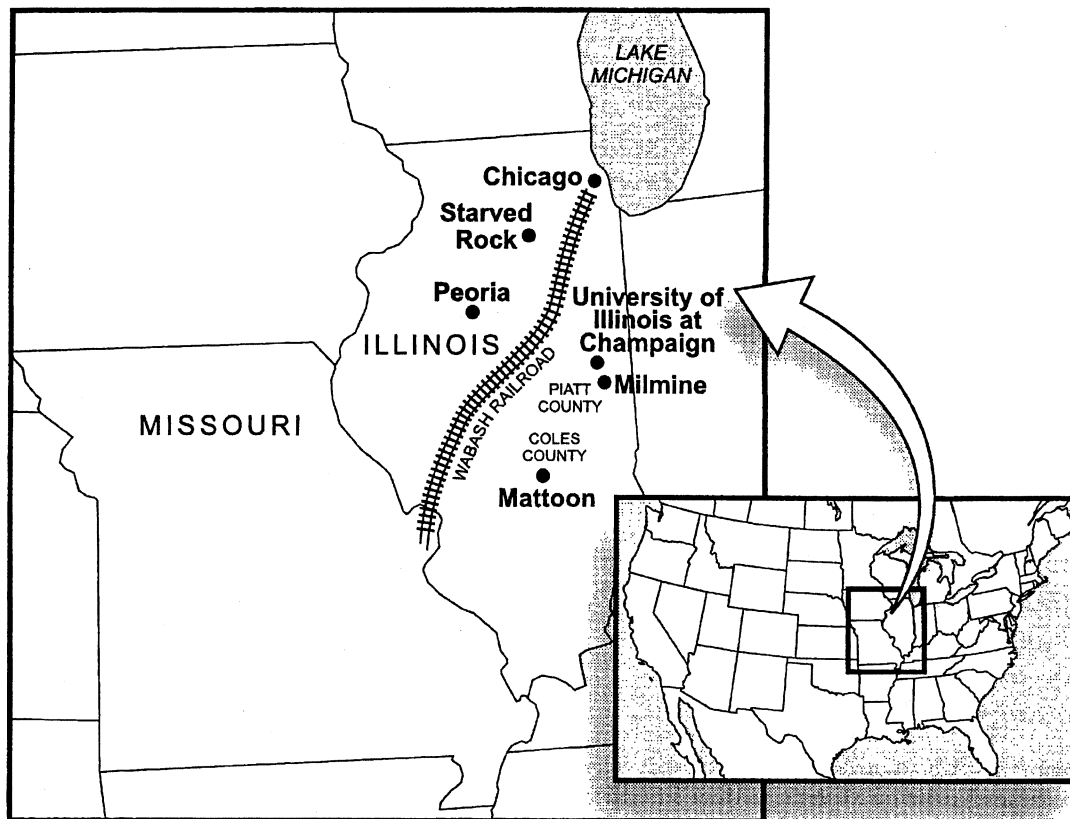
### CRITIC'S CORNER

Critics applaud Peck for his 18 novels, which tackle such complex subjects as human resilience, conformity and peer pressure, school library censorship, and freedom of speech. His expertise extends to horror, mystery, the occult, social commentary, history, satire, verse, and realism. He has advised school teachers and librarians to battle the narrow minds that seek to control the choice of literary works offered to young readers. He earned respect for his first novel, *Don't Look and It Won't Hurt* (1972). In 1975, the Friends of American Writers honored him for *The Ghost Belonged to Me*. *Close Enough to Touch* (1981) and *Father Figure* (1981) won ALA Best Book for Young Adults. In 1998, Peck earned a Newbery Honor Book Award for *A Long Way from Chicago*, an unusual handling of sequential events through a series of seven interlinking short stories. Critics compare its off-beat humor and warmth to Gary Paulsen's *Harris and Me: A Summer Remembered* (1993). Peck received the 2001 Newbery Award for *A Year Down Yonder*, a sequel to *A Long Way From Chicago*.

### OTHER BOOKS BY RICHARD PECK

- Amanda/Miranda* (1980)  
*Anonymously Yours* (1995)  
*Are You in the House Alone?* (1976)  
*Bel-Air Bambi and the Mall Rats* (1993)  
*Blossom Culp and the Sleep of Death* (1986)  
*Close Enough to Touch* (1981)  
*Don't Look and It Won't Hurt* (1972)  
*The Dreadful Future of Blossom Culp* (1983)  
*Dreamland Lake* (1990)  
*Father Figure* (1978)  
*The Ghost Belonged to Me* (1975)  
*Ghosts I Have Been* (1977)  
*Great Interactive Dream Machine* (1996)  
*The Last Safe Place on Earth* (1996)  
*Leap into Reality: Essays for Now* (1972)  
*A Long Way From Chicago* (1999)  
*Lost in Cyberspace* (1995)  
*Monster Night at Grandma's House* (1977)  
*Old Town* (1965)  
*Pictures That Storm Inside My Head* (1976)

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*Princess Ashley* (1987)  
*Remembering the Good Times* (1985)  
*Representing Super Doll* (1974)  
*Secrets of the Shopping Mall* (1979)  
*Strays Like Us* (1998)  
*This Family of Women* (1983)  
*Those Summer Girls I Never Met* (1988)  
*Through a Brief Darkness* (1973)  
*Unfinished Portrait of Jessica* (1991)  
*Voices after Midnight* (1989)  
*Write a Tale of Terror* (1987)

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### GENERAL OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the values of an agrarian Midwestern community
2. To account for hard times during and after the Great Depression
3. To interpret relationships among neighbors
4. To explain the impact of the railroad on communities
5. To list events caused by greed, suspicion, snobbery, deception, and petty crime
6. To explain the historic background
7. To analyze family relationships and influences
8. To describe attitudes toward urban outsiders
9. To express types of humor

### SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To explain how Grandma shows compassion
2. To analyze Grandma's styles of competition
3. To summarize the value of the attic and cobhouse
4. To account for changes in the grandchildren
5. To summarize Grandma's trickery and manipulation
6. To predict how war will affect Joey and Royce
7. To express the residual pain from World War I
8. To discuss the implications of widowhood
9. To describe the roles of the legionaire, banker, painter, and school principal
10. To analyze the means by which Grandma maintains her home during hard times

### LITERARY TERMS AND APPLICATIONS

For a better understanding of Richard Peck's style, present the following terms and applications:

**humor** a gentle, affirmative emphasis on human nature, foibles, and idiosyncrasies, for example, greed, meddling, and talkativeness among Grandma's neighbors. Peck identifies characters with humorous names, as with Maxine Patch, who flees the attic dressed only in a black snake, and Mrs. L. J. Weidenbach (wide in back), the self-glorifying banker's wife and DAR member pretending to have an illustrious family tree.

**irony** an implied discrepancy between what is said or done and what is meant, as found in Grandma's insistence that she must have Mary Alice's room to let out to a boarder for the extra money. In reality, Grandma fosters reunions of her son's family at great cost to herself, in particular, the price of tickets at Christmas for the children's return to Chicago. In so doing, she spends Christmas alone.

**literary foil** a character who serves as an opposite or as a standard by which another character is matched. In contrast to the vain, self-absorbed Carleen Lovejoy, Mary Alice is an outsider spurned for her homemade dress and shotgun-wielding, countrified grandmother. Similarly, the unlovely Ina-Rae Gage and Mildred Burdick are made outcasts by the self-important queen of the class, who paints her face like a trollop for her role as an angel in a nativity pageant.

**realism** a re-creation of life in theme, plot, setting, mood, and characterization. In the background of a humorous novel,

Peck expresses the real concerns of the late 1930s in descriptions of the hardships of the Dowdel family. When Grandma's son loses his job and gives up his apartment to live with his wife in one room, he must send their son Joey to the Civilian Conservation Corps to assure him work and income. Mary Alice must live with Grandma and attend a rural school in Piatt County rather than the high school of 1,000 students in Chicago.

### THE IMPORTANCE OF SETTING

The departure southwest from Chicago to Piatt County is the heart of Richard Peck's novel. During the 1937 recession, Mary Alice leaves an unstable financial picture at her parents' one-room apartment in Chicago. Without dramatization of loss of income or the anguish of parting from parents and brother, the author depicts her arrival at the Wabash station in Piatt County with World War I foot locker, Philco radio, and basket holding cat Bootsie. The poor condition of her Easter shoes and the dress made from a Butterick pattern draw attention to her background and make her feel more like a foreigner among fellow high school students.

Essential to Grandma's survival is her thrift and ability to live off the rural Illinois countryside. She is canny about ways of fattening her larder. She values obsolete castoffs in the cobhouse and recycles her dead husband's old clothes and boots for nightly foraging trips about the snow-covered fields, where she braves the dark, cold, and deep drifts to trap foxes. Her kindness in decorating the house with blue spruce greenery and a Christmas fir tree and in cutting tin stars from cans to make a halo indicate a sincere attempt to brighten Christmas for Mary Alice.

After the arrival of WPA muralist Arnold Green, Grandma indicates the multiple uses of property to keep her afloat during the recession following the Great Depression. The sudden appearance of a black snake suggests that there is more to the house than Mary Alice knows. The thought of other insidious creatures makes her wary of sheltering in the basement during the tornado. At the end of the school year, Grandma uses the house as an excuse to send Mary Alice home to Chicago, where she reunites with her family and finds work on the *Tribune* staff as a cub reporter. The return south to Piatt County for a home wedding indicates that, while the family is still in flux during World War II, Grandma Dowdel's house is Mary Alice's second home and source of maternal love on her wedding day.

### CROSS-CURRICULAR SOURCES

#### Novels

Joan Bauer, *Hope Was Here*

Ray Bradbury, *Dandelion Wine* and *Something Wicked This Way Comes*

Laura Esquivel, *Like Water for Chocolate*

Irene Hunt, *No Promises in the Wind*

Gary Paulsen, *Harris and Me*

Charles Portis, *True Grit*

John Van Druten, *I Remember Mama*

Lawrence Yep, *Dragonwings*

#### Short Stories

O. Henry, "The Ransom of Red Chief"

#### Poetry

Ernest Thayer, *Casey at the Bat*

#### Internet

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"The American Legion," <[www.legion.org/](http://www.legion.org/)>

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"Wabash Railroad History,"

<user.aol.com/wabashrr/wabhist.html>

"What in the Heck Is Burgoo?,"

<www.burgoo.org/burgoo.htm>

### THEMES AND MOTIFS

A study of the central issues and situations in *A Year Down Yonder* should include these aspects:

#### Themes

- family
- generations
- Great Depression
- coping
- social isolation
- self-sufficiency
- justice
- competition
- love

#### Motifs

- weathering an economic downturn
- countering vandalism
- assuming the role of rescuer
- preserving a family's past

### MEANING STUDY

Below are significant words, phrases, or sentences from the novel. Explain each in context. Titles and page numbers pinpoint each entry so that you can re-read the passage in which it appears.

1. My brother Joey—Joe—had been taken on by the Civilian Conservation Corps to plant trees out west. ("Prologue," p. 2)  
*(Joey Dowdel gets a job with the CCC, one of Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal programs that relieved unemployment from 1933 to 1942 by hiring teams of men to perform such national conservation work as tree planting, dam building, forest fire prevention, and maintaining forest roads, trails, and bridges. Living in work camps, a total of 3 million men received food, housing, medical care, and necessities plus \$30 a month, which some sent home to destitute families.)*
2. Oh, didn't I feel sorry for myself when the Wabash Railroad's Blue Bird train steamed into Grandma's town. ("Rich Chicago Girl," p. 4)  
*(To better serve the markets of Chicago and St. Louis, the Wabash rail line entered service on November 8, 1838, the first railroad locomotive ever operated in Illinois. In 1879, the line merged with other railways to form a vast Midwestern network.)*
3. It was the footlocker Dad had brought home from the Great War. ("Rich Chicago Girl," p. 6)  
*(World War I earned the name "Great War" for its involvement of so many nations on a huge combat map. When a second great war began in 1939, the numbering system altered "Great War" to "World War I.")*
4. Mother had given me a finger wave, and it was real tight from a center parting. ("Rich Chicago Girl," p. 11)  
*(The sleek, permed hairstyles of the 1920s and afterward were standard fashion among flappers, who further reduced frou-frou by wearing chemise dresses and smooth cloche hats. Chemical permanent-wave and hair-straightening preparations, invented in 1906, apply an ammonium solution, which relaxes the shape of protein molecules and causes them to take the shape of the curling rod on which the hair is rolled. Hairdressers fix the effects of curling by applying an oxidant.)*
5. For traveling, I had on my second-best summer cotton, the one with the puff sleeves and the three big celluloid buttons off one of mother's dresses. ("Rich Chicago Girl," p. 11)  
*(In 1838, Parisian agricultural chemist Anselme Payen isolated cellulose from wood, a marketable plastic resembling horn and ivory that was easily shaped into casings, boxes, and frames. At London's Great International Exhibition in 1862, British inventor Alexander Parkes displayed items made from Parkesine, a moldable, but highly flammable cellulose-based material compounded by blending chloroform and castor oil. In the late 1870s, the Xylonite Company Ltd. commercialized the substance, which replaced scarce ivory and tortoiseshell. It formed easily into buttons, box lids, handles, plaques, combs, collars and cuffs, and letter presses.)*
6. I hear she's had the dropsy and she's too puny to get off the bed. ("Rich Chicago Girl," p. 15)  
*(Dropsy is an obsolete term referring to edema, the accumulation of fluid in body tissue. The unhealthy condition is a symptom of numerous diseases, including kidney failure, congestive heart failure, gout, phlebitis, high blood pressure, and diabetes.)*
7. Though homemade, it was like the ones the hot dog sellers wore at Wrigley Field, with big square pockets in front to collect money. ("A Minute in the Morning," p. 47)  
*(Grandma's apron resembles the ones worn by vendors at Chicago's Wrigley Field, a baseball stadium built by William Wrigley, Jr. Wrigley owned the world's largest producer and distributor of chewing gum, with factories in the United States, Canada, and Australia. He used the profits from Wrigley's Spearmint Gum to buy the Chicago Cubs, a baseball team that used Wrigley Field as its home.)*
8. Grandma had been over by the Hoosier cabinet. ("Hearts and Flour," p. 81)  
*(Invented in the late nineteenth century, the Hoosier cabinet, named for the Hoosier Manufacturing Company in Newcastle, Indiana, was an attractive all-in-one work organizer and forerunner of cabinet built-ins, campers, and house trailers of the 1940s. A tall oak structure, it contained a flour bin with built-in sifter, sugar bin, clock, and canisters to hold tea, coffee, and up to six spices. On the porcelain tabletop, the baker could knead and roll out dough in easy reach of drawers holding cutters, pie crimpers, and cornmeal. The Hoosier Manufacturing Company advertised the cabinet as a step-saver, forerunner of revolutionary concepts of kitchen design, time and motion efficiency, and the evolving concept of home economics.)*
9. There's not room in that crackerbox to hang up your tintype. ("A Dangerous Man," p. 99)  
*(A tintype was a photo taken from the exposed tin or iron plate and processed with a highly inflammable blend of ether and alcohol. A common pose was the newlywed couple, who sought a likeness of themselves to preserve for their children and grandchildren.)*

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10. "Gone with the Wind," p. 115)  
(The chapter title names Margaret Mitchell's wildly popular epic romance, published in 1936. After winning the Pulitzer Prize, it remained a bestseller during the last of the depression. For the next two years, people speculated on how it would be filmed and who would play the heroine, Scarlett O'Hara.)

### COMPREHENSION STUDY

Answer the following questions in your own words. There is not always a right answer. Your judgment is important and you should be ready to defend your answers with quotations from the novel.

#### Motivation

1. What causes Mary Alice's departure from Chicago?  
(The journey south by rail reveals the serious financial sufferings of the Dowdels during the 1937 recession that follows the Great Depression. At age 15, Mary Alice Dowdel is content in Chicago living with her parents and brother Joey and attending a large high school. Because her father loses his job and moves the family into one rented room, Joey departs for the Civilian Conservation Corps and Mary Alice goes south to Piatt County, Illinois, to live with Grandma. Unlike the past trips in the summer, this visit will stretch over an indefinite span of time until the Dowdel family can afford to be together once more.)

#### Setting

2. Describe the school.  
(Mary Alice is surprised that Grandma takes her straight from the railroad depot to school, which started two weeks earlier. Outside the building, students tether their horses and mules to a hitching rail. Across a bare yard stands the school with its bell tower and outdoor privies, one for girls and one for boys. Grafitti spells out a humorous poem on the school door. The principal, who is also the janitor, coach, and shop teacher, places Mary Alice in the junior class, a grade above the one she attended in Chicago. The jump suggests that country schools offer a limited education.

Up rickety stairs, Mary Alice advances to Miss Butler's room and finds students sitting in old-fashioned double desks and reading *Romeo and Juliet*, which was apparently part of the curriculum in Chicago. Mary Alice shares a book and seat with Mildred Burdick, who gawks at Mary Alice's dress and makes insulting remarks. After English, history, and geography in one room, the students cross the hall to study math and science with Mr. Herkimer. The girls return to Miss Butler for home ec. while the boys stay with Mr. Herkimer for Ag.)

#### Character Development

3. How does Grandma trick the DAR?  
(Mrs. L. J. Weidenbach pushes her way into Grandma's kitchen to insist that she must replace Mrs. Vottsmeier, who is suffering from "the change," and bake the cherry tarts for the annual George Washington's Birthday tea. Without waiting for a reply, Mrs. Weidenbach departs. After Mary Alice reports in the Piatt County Call on the need for a pastry cook, Mrs. Weidenbach returns to demand that Grandma save "the dignity of the DAR." Not one to be manipulated, Grandma promises to accept the chore as her patriotic duty. Her terms give Mrs. Weidenbach pause: the tea must take place at Grandma's

house. The party gives her an opportunity to invite Effie Wilcox and Aunt Mae Griswold, neither of whom fit into the DAR clique. Adding to the unusual arrangements is the fruit punch spiked with bourbon.)

#### Historical Milieu

4. How does the novel reflect on the late 1930s?  
(To enhance realism in the novel, Peck incorporates research into period details. He notes that Mother gave Mary Alice a finger wave before the departure from Chicago. She wears short skirts and a dress with puffed sleeves made from a Butterick pattern, a popular source of home fashions. She clutches a Philco radio, on which she listens to station KMOX from St. Louis. A popular novelist of the era is Chicago-born writer Edgar Rice Burroughs, creator of Tarzan. Current interest in the disappearance of Amelia Earhart derives from the search for her downed plane in the South Pacific.

The difficulties of the recession that struck after the Great Depression are obvious in the dissolution of the Dowdel family, with Joey working for the Civilian Conservation Corps. Artist Arnold Green, who migrates to town in service to the Works Project Administration, paints murals for the government. Local teenage boys give up school to work on farms to help their families survive economic hardship. Grandma, who has to fend for herself, earns money by garnering nuts for the winter, making jelly and soap, renting out a room to Arnold Green, and trapping foxes and selling the pelts.)

#### Theme

5. How does Grandma express charity and love for others?  
(Grandma's kindnesses are indirect, but obvious to Mary Alice, who observes numerous good deeds at close range. Grandma feeds Mildred Burdick an after-school snack and offers huckleberry jam for her ailing grandmother. Armed with a crowbar, Grandma removes fallen plaster from Mr. Nyquist after the tornado, then moves on to Effie Wilcox's house to assess storm damage. To propose the best choice of wife for Arnold Green, Grandma invites Miss Butler for dinner before Maxine Patch lays claim to the visiting artist.

Grandma is at her best at the Armistice Day turkey shoot. She aids Wilma Abernathy in stirring burgoo and collects payment for each serving. When well-to-do people like banker L. J. Weidenbach come through the line, she claims to lack change. Mary Alice notices that, when a poor person offers money, Grandma "[palms] the dime back into the hand that offered it." Mrs. Sheets pays the greatest compliment at the end of the meal, when she acknowledges that grandma is "twice as bald-faced and brazen and . . . shameless" as the other Ladies' Auxiliary members, but concludes, "And all I have to say is, God bless you for your good work.")

#### Interpretation

6. Why does the story close with a glimpse of Mary Alice's wedding?  
(Mary Alice acquires important character traits from her grandmother. During the privations of World War II, Mary Alice is able to scrimp and make do with what is available. She rides a cramped train during wartime, saves ration cards to buy shoes and a suit from Marshall Field's basement, and wears no hose, which are in short supply because nylon is needed for the war effort. Instead of



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bought cake and flowers, Mary Alice accepts a homemade cake and nosegay comprised of a paper doily filled with lilies of the valley and Queen Anne's lace, a common weed.

More important to the story is Mary Alice's tender regard for her grandmother. In lieu of a father to give the bride away, Mary Alice honors Grandma with the task. Their closeness, lacking words and gestures of love, grows out of a sharing of hard times. With coping skills much like Grandma's, Mary Alice is proud to conclude, "We lived happily ever after."

### Conflict

7. Why does Grandma send Mildred Burdick on a long chase into the country?

(Mary Alice's first day at school begins inauspiciously with Grandma's examination of a horse at the hitching post. After leaving Mary Alice with a warning about Burdicks, Grandma is prepared for Mildred's unkind mistreatment of the newcomer to class. When Mildred forces Mary Alice to walk home and demands a dollar, Grandma orders the ne'er-do-well teenager to take off her boots and tenderly invites her to enjoy corn bread, jam, and buttermilk. While soliciting information about family well being and health, Grandma appears to sympathize with Grandma Idella, who has dropsy.)

After Mildred's horse wanders away with the girl's boots tied around its neck, Mary Alice realizes that her wily grandmother is establishing her own brand of justice. As a comeuppance to Mildred for mistreating Mary Alice, Grandma sends the horse on its way to Milmine to its rightful owners. Mildred, following barefoot, will have to walk five miles both ways. Grandma is certain that the girl will not appear in school the next day to harass Mary Alice.)

### Atmosphere

8. How does Peck demonstrate community spirit at the turkey shoot?

(Mary Alice notes that "People took Armistice day seriously back then, nineteen years after the end of the Great War." The annual turkey shoot receives adequate advertisements from posters around town. Held at the Abernathy farm, the event raises money for the American Legion, a league of World War I veterans who aid survivors of wounds and gassing from the war's terrible trench battles and spread of poisons.)

The turkey shoot also supports people like Mrs. Wilma Abernathy, the mother of a blind, crippled war veteran whom she keeps in an upstairs room rather than send him to a veteran's hospital. As the men engage in shooting air rifles at paper targets, the women superintend the cooking and serving of burgoo, a thick stew of meat and vegetables. At 11:00 A. M., all fall silent and face east toward France to honor the signing of the armistice that brought an end to the fighting. Grandma remains behind after the others leave and joins Mary Alice in visiting Wilma's son as a gesture of support for the mother's hard job of tending an invalid. Mary Alice realizes that the blind man "could have been my dad," who was a member of the generation that fought the war.)

### Author Purpose

9. Why does the novel appeal to readers?  
(Peck departs from the usual sentimental image of

grandchildren visiting their grandmothers by depicting an able widow who has no intention of being a victim in old age. Grandma's sly wit and humorous comments sparkle with folksiness based on a grim realism about human foibles. Content in her life as a country widow living on her own, Grandma looks forward to fall, the season when she garners foods to dry and can for the winter. The activities that involve Mary Alice also serve as more useful lessons than the knitting of hot pads made of bottle caps in home economics.)

The unusual turns in the novel create a humorous incongruence based on country values. Grandma has no intention of leaving Mr. Nyquist's yard without knocking more pecans from his tree. Her clumsy efforts at driving a Massey-Ferguson tractor startle Mary Alice, who is amazed at the lengths to which her grandmother will go to earn her living. The purpose of trapping and skinning red foxes in the cold night is unclear to Mary Alice until she realizes that her grandmother is earning fare money to bring Joey to Illinois and send both children home to Chicago for Christmas. The understated love of their grandmother offers a reason to enjoy Peck's writing.)

### Structure

10. How does the novel connect episodes?

(In the brief episodic novel, Peck makes use of bits of background information, which he sprinkles throughout the text without comment. Grandma's homemade glue recurs in Mary Alice's fake valentines. The noises in the attic seem harmless until Maxine Patch flees the house naked with a black snake draped over her. The Lane Bryant catalog precedes Grandma's maroon crepe dress, pearls, and new shoes at the DAR tea. The baby abandoned in the manger links with Mildred's permanent withdrawal from school, apparently to conceal her pregnancy.)

The final reunion of Mary Alice with her parents at a new apartment in Rogers Park is also a connecting of episodes. Grandma, who extorts easy money from Arnold Green for room and board, pretends to open a rooming house and rent out Mary Alice's room. The scene gives Peck a chance to display Grandma's disingenuous wide eyes at the notion that her daughter-in-law fears her. Completing the picture is Grandma's intent to keep Bootsie, a cat she scorned at Mary Alice's arrival as "another mouth to feed.")

### HOW LANGUAGE WORKS

Essential to Peck's brand of humor are terse, humorous revelations of truth:

1. On parting with Mary Alice at Dearborn Station for the trip to Piatt County, Mother murmurs, "Better you than me," a reference to the trials of living with Grandma Dowdel.
2. In reference to the town snobs in the DAR, Mary Alice remarks, tongue in cheek, "They all traced their families back to the Revolutionary War (our side)."
3. In explanation of the difference between "naked" and "nude," Arnold Green explains, "I studied in Paris."
4. On seeing a red fox caught in a trap and shot with Grandma's .22 pistol, Mary Alice remarks, "I fought the supper in my throat."
5. After Mary Alice braves the tornado and leaves school, Grandma understands the need to return home. Mary

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Alice explains, "She could read minds, even in the dark."

### ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

#### Art

1. Compile an illustrated notebook of details that make the story real.
2. Sketch a logo for the Wabash Blue Bird. Add a motto to establish its importance to the state of Illinois and the whole Midwestern economy.

#### Cinema

View films with settings and characters and situations approximating the style of humor in *A Long Way From Chicago*. Compare the movies' settings, themes, and dialogue to those of Peck's episodic novels. Comment on the importance of timing and implication to Grandma's manipulations of other people.

#### Drama

1. Arrange a TV cooking program or county fair demonstration of the preparation and serving of burgoo. Post a brief history of the recipe. Compare its beginnings to that of Brunswick stew.
2. Draw stage settings for a dramatization of Grandma's most unusual deeds. Supply sketches of costumes and props.
3. Create a storyboard account of the turkey shoot at the Abernathy farm. Show Grandma's role in stirring and serving burgoo and collecting money. Account for the face at the upstairs window and Mrs. Abernathy's intent to keep her boy at home rather than send him to a veteran's hospital.

#### Education

1. Propose curriculum for a class to help students and their families cope with the effects of the Great Depression. Include guest speakers from the military, American Legion, Civilian Conservation Corps, and Works Projects Administration. Include career-centered activities that might lure boys back to school, such as trial applications for railroad jobs, admittance to the military, or posts at the Boeing plant in Seattle. Include important breakthroughs in home economics, particularly the formation of the Good Housekeeping Institute and the Temporary Emergency Relief Agency, publication of *The Girl and Her Home* (1932) and Eleanor Roosevelt's *It's Up to the Women* (1933), and the formation of the First Nutrition Congress, Grange, Ladies' Aid Societies, 4-H, Women's Christian Temperance Union, and the extension service.
2. List proof that Mary Alice learns from living with Grandma, particularly an understanding of hard work, resourcefulness, old age, snobbery, young love, the power of the media, competition, unwed mothers, charity, thrift, family unity, the cost of war, and delinquency.

#### History and Social Studies

1. Discuss with a small group why the Burdick girls were separated and placed in foster care in 1883. Comment on more modern methods of preserving families when one or both parents go to jail. Contrast the Burdick girls' situation with that of Joey and Mary Alice during their separation from their parents and with Royce McNabb's departure from Mattoon.
2. Report orally on Joey's flying a B-17 Fortress over Germany during World War II. Explain why Mary Alice must marry without parents or brother at the wedding, why

she saves ration cards for new shoes and suit, and why nylon stockings are scarce in 1945.

3. Divide the class into small groups to brainstorm ways to help elderly people living far from town, such as checking on their safety during and after tornadoes, visiting shut-ins, raising money for the destitute, and inviting them to the Christmas pageant and to home parties like the DAR's Washington's Birthday tea.
4. Sketch the front and back of a silver dollar minted on or before 1938. Give the history of the coin and facts about its circulation. Why do people collect silver dollars, Susan B. Anthony dollars, quarters with state emblems, two-dollar bills, and Euros and other foreign money and stamps?
5. Based on your understanding of the novel, lead a panel discussion of the effects of juvenile delinquency. Support your opinions with events from the novel.
6. Create a mural or web site of Illinois sites that impact the story, including Mattoon, Dearborn Station, Chicago, Piatt County, Starved Rock, University of Illinois at Champaign, Rogers Park, *Chicago Tribune*, Marshall Field, Brookfield Zoo, Coles County, and Milmine. Explain why life in Piatt County bears little resemblance to life in Chicago in the 1930s. Mention privies, school parties, fox trapping, gathering Christmas greenery, cooking burgoo, hayrides, and turkey shoots as examples.
7. Make a bulletin board of events and amusements that interest teens in Mary Alice and Royce McNabb's day.

#### Language Arts

1. List terms that need more explanation, such as cob-house, Red Sea, and Annie Oakley. Make flash cards illustrating each.
2. Explain why the military would name a plane the "Flying Fortress." List other famous planes from World War II.
3. Prepare a speech contrasting examples of humor. Explain what makes Grandma a funny character.
4. Read aloud from other humorous or historical works. Include Ray Bradbury's *Dandelion Wine*, Carl Sandburg's *On the Road*, Gary Paulsen's *Harris and Me*, O. Henry's "The Ransom of Red Chief," Charles Portis's *True Grit*, and John Van Druten's *I Remember Mama*. Explain how conversations can be funny and serious at the same time, for example, Grandma's tricking Mildred Burdick.
5. Explain in a theme the significance of the chapter titles "A Minute in the Morning" and "Hearts and Flour," particularly as they apply to groups like the DAR and the Ladies' Auxiliary of the American Legion. Propose other titles that explain why Mary Alice learns so much from Grandma and local events when she spends the school year in Piatt County.
6. Write a paragraph in which you explain the role of a minor character, such as Effie Wilcox. Determine which characters respect Grandma out of fear of her trickery or expertise with a Winchester.

#### Music

1. Select mood music for a stage or cinema version of the novel. Cover the serving of pies at the Halloween party, making cherry tarts and punch laced with bourbon, arrival on the Wabash Blue Bird and viewing of the rav-



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ages of the 1937 recession that followed the Great Depression, comic music for Maxine's flight from the attic and Mildred's pursuit of the runaway horse, and intense background for the revelation of an infant in the manger at the Christmas pageant. For Armistice Day, play recordings of "The Stars and Stripes Forever" and post on the chalkboard the accomplishments of John Philip Sousa, the March King.

### Science and Health

1. Compose an informational poster on Grandma's admiration of singer Kate Smith. Explain why Grandma's admiration of an obese singer endangers her health. List types of dangers to the body from overweight, particularly joint pain, stress on the heart and kidneys, shortness of breath, limitations to physical activity and stamina, and poor nutrition.
2. Outline a recipe for making glue. Explain why the hardened substance sticks to Mary Alice's fingers and removes Augie's hair.
3. Read aloud a recipe for decorative cherry tarts. Explain why the recipe is more difficult than those for pumpkin and pecan pies.

### Speech

1. Organize a discussion of family hardships during the Great Depression and the 1937 recession. Explain why Joey and Mary Alice must leave the Chicago apartment. Comment on ways that Grandma raises money to send them home for Christmas.
2. Compose an oral tour guide of Illinois. Express the importance of Piatt County, Mattoon, Bement, University of Illinois at Champaign, Wrigley Field, the EI, Wabash Railroad's Blue Bird, Starved Rock, Dearborn Station, and the Great Depression to state history. Explain how Sally Rand and Edgar Rice Burroughs contributed to the state's reputation.
3. Outline a speech celebrating Illinois's patriotism. Characterize the high points of state history, especially its patriotic organizations and contributions to the American Revolution and the growth and development of the *Chicago Tribune*. Stress the railroad's role in unifying the state and bolstering its economy.

### Law

1. Read aloud Illinois state laws governing the rights of adults to trap foxes and keep firearms. Explain why Grandma has a reputation for a short temper, resourcefulness, and good aim with her Winchester shotgun.
2. Explain with stick figures the events that lead up to Grandma and Mary Alice's full bags of pecans and pumpkins balanced on the wagon. List and define the laws that they break, including trespassing and petty larceny.
3. Summarize reasons why unmarried girls like Mildred Burdick abandon infants rather than claim them.

### Psychology

1. Describe aloud the ways that Grandma manipulates and deceives people.
2. Characterize Grandma's moral integrity, courage, daring, resourcefulness, and civic influence. Summarize the personal traits that strengthen her role as a neighbor, friend, defender of the helpless, widow, grandparent, cook, citi-

- zen, supporter of public schools, patriot, and role model.
3. Write an encyclopedia entry on the Wabash Railroad. Add details that explain how railway service between Chicago and St. Louis strengthened the economy and social structure of Illinois and why the train is called the Blue Bird.

### ALTERNATE ASSESSMENT

1. List examples of disruption and lawlessness in the lives of the characters, for example, the theft of privies at Halloween.
2. Compile a list of actions and statements that demonstrate Grandma's clever tricks.
3. Compose a scene in which Joey returns from World War II to visit Grandma, Royce, and Mary Alice. Account for changes in the nation since his Christmas visit, including ration cards and shortages of nylon.
4. Make a character list and explain the character flaws of each.
5. Summarize historical details that impinge on the story.

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### VOCABULARY TEST

Complete each of the following sentences with an appropriate synonym from the list below for the terms in parentheses. You will have answers left over when you finish.

adder	chancel	dormer	isinglass	repertoire
argyle	commitment	ebony	jaunty	scrapple
batting	confederates	flimflam	latticework	skimpy
benediction	corseted	gaggle	loomed	swathed
brazen	crepe	gloating	modes	teetered
burgoo	deigned	grappled	preened	tuft
capitulated	dispense	invocation	radiated	

1. The ice on the woven-wire fences was a (crisscross) \_\_\_\_\_ of diamonds.
2. A merry fire crackled behind (mica) \_\_\_\_\_ windows.
3. They bore her away, out the front door in a (group) \_\_\_\_\_, their hats over their ears and their veils trailing.
4. Carleen Lovejoy (stooped) \_\_\_\_\_ to let me serve her, followed by her simpering group—Gertrude and Irene Stemple and Mona Veech.
5. Carleen Lovejoy was at one end of the basement in a knot of her (pals) \_\_\_\_\_.
6. She turned to give me one of her (assortment) \_\_\_\_\_ of surprised looks.
7. In the presence of these witnesses I'm on record for saying you outdo the most two-faced, two-fisted short-changer, (fraud) \_\_\_\_\_ artist, and full-time extortionist anybody ever saw working this part of the country.
8. But the toothpick in her mouth moved in a (carefree) \_\_\_\_\_ way, like a tiny baton conducting a small symphony.
9. Its head was (wrapped) \_\_\_\_\_ in something.
10. So I'd go out with Grandma to work her traps in the (dark) \_\_\_\_\_ and silver nights.
11. My family descends from Captain Crow, who was at Yorktown when Cornwallis (surrendered) \_\_\_\_\_.
12. Silence fell like a (blessing) \_\_\_\_\_.
13. Mrs. Weidenbach (struggled) \_\_\_\_\_ with her giant purse and came up with the Piatt County Call newspaper.
14. I need a (promise) \_\_\_\_\_.
15. Word (spread) \_\_\_\_\_ that Royce McNabb had sent Ina-Rae Gage a valentine.

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### COMPREHENSION TEST A

#### Part I: Quotation Identification (30 points)

Match each of the following quotations from the novel with its speaker. Place the letter of your response in the blank provided at left. Some of the answers will be used more than once and some not at all.

- |  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| _____ 1. We better bank all this money in coffee cans for safekeeping.                 | A. Joey            |
| _____ 2. When the siren blew, I got behind my pie safe, and I was too nervous to live. | B. Ida-Rae Gage    |
| _____ 3. I studied in Paris.   | C. Royce McNabb    |
| _____ 4. I trace back through my mother to the Crows of Culpepper county, Virginia.    | D. Mr. Fluke       |
| _____ 5. I ride. You walk.   | E. Miss Butler     |
| _____ 6. Be still, my heart.   | F. Grandma         |
| _____ 7. You sure dreamed up some swell messages.                                      | G. Mrs. Weidenbach |
| _____ 8. You's my long-lost sister!  | H. Mary Alice      |
| _____ 9. You know, percentages are basically decimals.                                 | I. Wilma Abernathy |
| _____ 10. I sit at the feet of the Bard.   | J. Mother          |
| _____ 11. There's some fox in me.  | K. Effie Wilcox    |
| _____ 12. I'm falling a little behind in math.   | L. Aunt Mae        |
| _____ 13. High school's getting to be a luxury in times like these.                    | M. Arnold Green    |
| _____ 14. Boy, you done took on the wrong privy.                                       | N. Carleen Lovejoy |
| _____ 15. In all the years before, it was never better than twelve dollars.            | O. Mildred Burdick |

#### Part II: True/False (20 points)

Mark the following statements either T for true or F if any part is false.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Grandma thinks that she is more enterprising than the ladies from the American Legion auxiliary.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Mary Alice finds Bootsie and April hiding in the tornado shelter from Grandma.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Because of Royce's tight haircut and country background, he becomes an outsider.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Mismatched eye colors give away the source of the infant in the manger.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Mother is in Seattle and can't come for the wedding.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Cherry tarts suit the DAR's Valentine tea.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Mrs. Weidenbach lies about her ties to the American Revolution.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Mary Alice keeps the family apartment and gets a job as cub reporter at the *Chicago Tribune*.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Grandma has little respect or compassion for Old Man Nyquist.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. The principal is angry about the glue that strips Augie's head.

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### Part III: Completion (20 points)

Fill in the blanks below with a word or phrase which completes the sentence.

1. Mary Alice takes the Wabash \_\_\_\_\_ to her grandmother's house in \_\_\_\_\_ County, Illinois.
2. Grandma recognizes the scream of a \_\_\_\_\_ and hurries to shoot it and remove it from the \_\_\_\_\_.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ allows Mary Alice to choose \_\_\_\_\_ from the catalog.
4. The hasty departure of members of the \_\_\_\_\_ leaves Grandma with a tray of \_\_\_\_\_ and extra fruit punch.
5. After the tea, \_\_\_\_\_ stops contributing events to the \_\_\_\_\_.

### Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Describe how local people celebrate holidays.
2. Explain why Mrs. Weidenbach needs Grandma's assistance.
3. Discuss Grandma's countrified habits.
4. Account for the impact of world wars on the public.
5. Summarize events that follow the nativity pageant.

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**COMPREHENSION TEST B**

**Part II: Multiple Choice (20 points)**

Select the phrase that completes each of the following sentences. Place the letter of your response in the blank provided at left.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Mary Alice does not realize that the  
A. cat has rubbed its paws in butter.  
B. noises overhead are made by a black snake.  
C. artist from the WPA took her bedroom.  
D. Burdicks are in the penitentiary for horse stealing.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Grandma warns Arnold indirectly  
A. that Miss Butler is unmarried.  
B. about cats in the attic.  
C. about expenditure of government money on the WPA.  
D. that Maxine Patch is man-hungry.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The money from red fox skins  
A. pays for Joey's ticket.  
B. buys two kinds of pies for the school party.  
C. assures Mary Alice of a halo for her costume.  
D. ends up in Grandma's apron as she stirs the burgoo.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. The tire  
A. marks the paper target of the American Legion turkey shoot.  
B. blows out from Mary Alice's wild shot with the air rifle.  
C. cushions the blow of the Massey-Ferguson.  
D. is part of Grandma's trap to stop the boys from stealing privies.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. To pay for the stolen pumpkins,  
A. Mary Alice gives Reba a second slice of pie.  
B. Augie leaves his initialed pocket knife.  
C. Grandma intends to leave a pie on the Pensingers' porch.  
D. women take turns stirring the burgoo with a paddle.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Upstairs, Mary Alice sees  
A. the results of gassing during the Great War.  
B. April safe in Grandma's lap.  
C. a cot on which she will sleep during cold weather.  
D. the DAR ladies approaching the house with trays of cherry tarts.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Mildred demands  
A. that Miss Butler move the "rich Chicago girl."  
B. a better part in the nativity pageant.  
C. that people stop making fun of her father, who has been in the penitentiary.  
D. a dollar.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Grandma dresses up  
A. for the turkey shoot.  
B. and welcomes the DAR.  
C. in a crepe dress that she bought with money from stolen pecans.  
D. to meet her granddaughter at the Blue Bird.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. The WPA muralist  
A. receives laundry free with room and board.  
B. looks forward to settling down in rural Illinois.  
C. returns to New York with Miss Butler.  
D. completes a mural for the post office.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Local people enjoy Halloween so much that  
A. they dress up for the school party.  
B. pranksters start their mischief before Columbus Day.  
C. Grandma makes a deal with Mr. Nyquist to pick up pecans for pies.  
D. the school principal refuses to scold Augie for stealing privies.

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### Part II: Matching (30 points)

Match the following descriptions with names of characters from the list below. Place the letter of your response in the blank provided at left. You will use some answers more than once and some not at all.

- |   |                    |
|---|--------------------|
| _____ 1. sends post cards from the Great Salt Lake            | A. Joey            |
| _____ 2. follows a stolen horse                               | B. Ida-Rae Gage    |
| _____ 3. hesitates to take Mary Alice upstairs                | C. Royce McNabb    |
| _____ 4. borrows Grandma's privy                              | D. Mr. Fluke       |
| _____ 5. earns popularity at lunch after receiving valentines | E. Miss Butler     |
| _____ 6. attends the wedding on a three-day pass              | F. Grandma         |
| _____ 7. welcomes Royce as the team's savior                  | G. Mrs. Weidenbach |
| _____ 8. cackles at Mrs. Weidenbach's lies                    | H. Mary Alice      |
| _____ 9. admires artists                                      | I. Wilma Abernathy |
| _____ 10. nails the attic shut                                | J. Mother          |
| _____ 11. has a reputation with a Winchester                  | K. Effie Wilcox    |
| _____ 12. stands center stage among angels                    | L. Aunt Mae        |
| _____ 13. claims to have been Wilhelmina Roach                | M. Arnold Green    |
| _____ 14. sends a dollar birthday gift                        | N. Carleen Lovejoy |
| _____ 15. gives Ina-Mae a hot pad crocheted with bottle caps  | O. Mildred Burdick |

### Part III: Short Answer (20 points)

Supply a word or phrase in answer to the following questions. Place your response in the blank provided at left.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Who works for Boeing?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Where is the "light housekeeping" room?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. What does Grandma send Grandma Idella?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. What does Mr. Weidenbach give Grandma in exchange for burgoo?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. How does Mrs. Sheets reward Grandma?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Who became Effie Wilcox's foster parents?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Who claims to be a foreigner like Mary Alice?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. What full-figured woman does Grandma admire?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. What does Grandma use in addition to glue to catch the pranksters?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Who is the tall man sitting with Grandma at the United Brethren Church?

### Part IV: Essay (30 points)

Choose two and answer in complete sentences.

1. Explain why Grandma appears to have "eyes in the back of her head."
2. Summarize preparations for the nativity pageant.
3. Describe examples of Grandma's trickery.
4. Summarize the hardships of the Great Depression.
5. Describe Mary Alice's role in Grandma's foraging expeditions.



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**ANSWER KEY**

**VOCABULARY TEST**

- |                 |               |                 |
|-----------------|---------------|-----------------|
| 1. latticework  | 6. repertoire | 11. capitulated |
| 2. isinglass    | 7. flimflam   | 12. benediction |
| 3. gaggle       | 8. jaunty     | 13. grappled    |
| 4. deigned      | 9. wrapped    | 14. commitment  |
| 5. confederates | 10. ebony     | 15. radiated    |

**COMPREHENSION TEST A**

**Part I: Quotation Identification (30 points)**

- |      |       |       |
|------|-------|-------|
| 1. F | 6. N  | 11. F |
| 2. K | 7. B  | 12. H |
| 3. M | 8. K  | 13. D |
| 4. G | 9. C  | 14. D |
| 5. O | 10. E | 15. I |

**Part II: True/False (20 points)**

- |      |       |
|------|-------|
| 1. T | 6. F  |
| 2. F | 7. T  |
| 3. F | 8. T  |
| 4. T | 9. F  |
| 5. T | 10. F |

**Part III: Completion (20 points)**

1. Blue Bird, Piatt
2. fox, trap
3. Grandma, shoes
4. DAR, cherry tarts
5. Mary Alice, Piatt County Call

**Part IV: Essay (30 points)**

Answers will vary.

**COMPREHENSION TEST B**

**Part I: Matching (30 points)**

- |      |       |       |
|------|-------|-------|
| 1. A | 6. C  | 11. F |
| 2. O | 7. D  | 12. N |
| 3. I | 8. K  | 13. G |
| 4. K | 9. E  | 14. J |
| 5. B | 10. M | 15. H |

**Part II: Multiple Choice (20 points)**

- |      |       |
|------|-------|
| 1. B | 6. A  |
| 2. D | 7. D  |
| 3. A | 8. B  |
| 4. C | 9. A  |
| 5. C | 10. B |

**Part III: Short Answer (20 points)**

1. Dad
2. Chicago
3. huckleberry jam
4. silver dollar
5. invitation to join the Auxiliary
6. the Schultzes
7. Royce McNabb
8. Kate Smith
9. wire
10. Joey

**Part IV: Essay (30 points)**

Answers will vary.



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