

ON THE WINGS OF HEROES

By: Richard Peck

Dial Books

2007



<http://richardpeck.smartwriters.com/>

About the Author:

Richard Peck, the first children's author ever to receive a National Humanities Medal, has won nearly every children's book award, including the Newbery Medal for *A YEAR DOWN YONDER*. He lives in New York City. Richard Peck actually began his career as a high school teacher. He found it hard to deal with his students' high school behavior and problems and decided to cut his career short. But, his lessons as a teacher were not useless. Peck decided to take his observations and lessons from being a teacher and use it as material for books. He said, "Ironically, it was my students who taught me to be a writer, though I was hired to teach them." Peck studied at

DePauw University, earning a bachelor's degree in English in 1956. After college, he was drafted into the US Army as a captain's assistant and spent two years serving in Stuttgart, Germany. After his military service ended, he completed a master's degree at Southern Illinois University in 2003 and taught junior high and high school English. He left teaching in 1971 to write his first novel, *Don't Look and It Won't Hurt*. He currently lives in New York.

Awards:

- 1974: Edgar Allan Poe Award nominee, Best Juvenile, *Dreamland Lake*
- 1977: Edgar Allan Poe Award, Best Juvenile, *Are You in the House Alone?*
- 1990: Margaret A. Edwards Award
- 1990: ALAN Award
- 1991: University of Southern Mississippi Medallion
- 1999: National Book Award finalist: Newbery Honor, *A Long Way from Chicago*
- 2001: Newbery Medal, *A Year Down Yonder* 2001: National Humanities Medal
- 2004: Jeremiah Ludington Memorial Award
- 2005: ALAN Award

Novels Written:

- 1972: *Don't Look and It Won't Hurt*
- 1973: *Dreamland Lake*
- 1973: *Through a Brief Darkness*
- 1974: *Representing Super Doll*
- 1976: *Are You in the House Alone?*
- 1976: *The Ghost Belonged to Me*

1977: *Ghosts I Have Been*
1977: *Monster Night at Grandma's House*
1978: *Father Figure*
1979: *Secrets of the Shopping Mall*
1980: *Amanda/Miranda*
1981: *Close Enough to Touch*
1981: *New York Time*
1983: *The Dreadful Future of Blossom Culp*
1983: *This Family of Women*
1985: *Remembering the Good Times*
1986: *Blossom Culp and the Sleep of Death*
1987: *Princess Ashley*
1987: *Write a Tale of Terror*
1988: *Those Summer Girls I Never Met*
1989: *Voices After Midnight*
1991: *Unfinished Portrait of Jessica*
1993: *Bel-Air Bambi and the Mall Rats*
1995: *Lost in Cyberspace!*
1995: *The Last Safe Place on Earth*
1996: *The Great Interactive Dream Machine: Another
Adventure in Cyberspace*
1998: *London Holiday*
1998: *A Long Way from Chicago*
1998: *Strays Like Us*
2000: *A Year Down Yonder*
2001: *Fair Weather*
2003: *The River Between Us*
2004: *The Teacher's Funeral: A Comedy in Three Parts*
2006: *Here Lies The Librarian*
2007: *On the Wings of Heroes*

Annotation:

Davy Bowman has two heroes in his life, his father and his older brother. His dad is a grown up kid who could always be relied on to play out on the street with all the other neighborhood kids. Davy never had to worry about saying something wrong in front of his Dad. But his father's heart is breaking as his older brother, Bill, is in training flying B-17s and about to be shipped overseas to help with the war effort. With World War II invading Davy's home front, he is realizing that his childhood and his family is changing in ways that he never could have expected. With neighborhood wide blackouts, the kids no longer play out on the street. Instead they scrounge around for rubber and scrap metal to donate to the war effort. Bill, finally overseas, has gone missing while on a flight mission and Davy is now forced to face the grim effects of the war and grow up in a hurry.

What I loved most about *On the Wings of Heroes* was that even in a time of uncertainty Peck was able to infuse comedy into this novel. Through boyhood adventures and family ties, Peck painted a portrait of an unforgettable and memorable family. He made this war feel so real and believable. Although this book was not fast paced, I still thought it was tender and unforgettable.

Genre: Historical Fiction

Point of View: The main character, Davy Bowman is telling the story. It is in first person

Theme: There are several themes in this novel. They are heroism, sacrifice, sense of community and family's closeness and love.

The theme conveyed by the title is the reader will look inside the lives of people the reader would consider to be heroes.

Conflict: The main conflict in this novel is that of Davy Bowman's internal struggle with war and the effects it has had on him, his family and community.

Conflict Resolution: Davy takes a pro active approach to help with the war efforts. He cannot do anything to stop what is going on in his world so he tries to do all he can to help. He rations books and collects scrap metal. All of his efforts and the safe return home of his brother seem turn his once upside down world, right side up!

Characters:

Davy Bowman, the main character. He is

Bill Bowman, Davy's older brother. He goes off to war and comes up missing. He is Davy's hero.

Mr. and Mrs. Hiser, Neighbors that lived in the second house from the corner. They told great stories to Davy. Mr.Hiser was deaf but they both were musical.

Scooter, Davy's best friend from the neighborhood. They played and rode bikes together everyday.

Miss Mossman, Davy's classroom teacher. The kids in class didn't care for her much at all. She was nasty and didn't want to help much with war efforts.

Miss Howe, Davy's principal.

Earl Bowman, Davy's dad. He was like a gig kid. He liked to play hide and seek and pull pranks on people. He is Davy's hero.

Jimmy Johnson, Davy's country neighbor. He was a good farmer that was slow to adapt to modern ways.

Old Lady Graves, Davy's old, crabby neighbor that was a great baker.

Old Man Leland Rogers, Davy's neighbor that was always struggling with his teenage boys.

Miss Landis, Davy's teacher. She was well manicured and sweet but spent way too much time on grammar.

Grandpa and Grandma Riddle, Davy's grandparents. Grandma didn't get along too well with his mom and didn't visit often. She was an extremely large woman. After Bill was missing, they came to stay at the house with the Bowmans

Setting: This story takes place in a neighborhood in Illinois before and during World War II.

Interest Level/Reading Level:

The interest level of this book is between the ages of 9-11.
www.kidsread.com The reading level is 6th grade

BOOKTALK:

Davy Bowman's heroes are his Dad and brother Bill. His dad served in the First World War, and now his brother is in training with the Air Force. With his community and his best friend Scooter, Davy fills his days collecting scrap metal, newspaper, and milkweed for the war effort. When his parents receive a telegram that Bill has turned up missing, the Bowman family is turned upside down. For a nostalgic look at small town through the eyes of a young boy during World War II, read *On the Wings of Heroes*.

Language:

Aeronautics (p.29) - the science of flight.

Spirea (p.59) - a type of shrub

Spindly (p.63) - bony or skinny

Furl (p.73) - wrap up or fold

Congressional Medal of Honor (p.89) - the highest award that can be given to a military person.

Chamber of Commerce (p.106)-a business federation representing companies, business associations and state and local chambers in the United States.

Indiana Academic Standards:

Reading: 4.1.1, 4.1.6, 4.1.7, 4.2.3, 4.2.5, 4.2.6, 4.2.7, 4.3.2., 4.3.3, 4.3.5 5.1.1, 5.1.2, 5.1.5, 5.1.6, 5.3.2, 5.3.4, 5.3.8, 6.1.1, 6.1.2, 6.1.4, 6.1.5, 6.3.1, 6.3.2, 6.3.4, 6.3.5, 6.3.9

Social Studies: 4.1.0, 4.4.2, 4.4.4, 5.1.18, 5.1.19, 5.3.3, 6.2.7

Read Aloud Passages:

#1) Chapter 1 pages 5-7; this is a descriptive that paints a picture of what Davy's neighborhood was like. It goes on to describe the neighbors, their daily routines, and how they all interact with each other. It seems like a place anyone would really want to live.

#2) Chapter 29 page 145; this is a short paragraph describing the scene when the doorbell rang at the Bowman's house. It was the telegram telling them that Bill was found and alive!

Anticipation Guide:

Before		Archer's Quest	After	
Agree	Disagree	War always makes the world a safer place.	Agree	Disagree
		An author can use humor in a novel that is on a sad topic.		
		Young children can do things to help with war efforts.		
		Nothing good ever comes from war.		
		It is important to use descriptive language when writing so the reader has a clear picture in his mind.		

