

YHBA

Title: On the Wings of Heroes

Author: Richard Peck

Publisher: Penguin Group

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Laura McWilliams

About the Author

Richard Peck:



Peck was born in 1934 in Decatur, Illinois, which he considered "a safe and quiet town". After high school Peck continued his education at Exeter College in England. Before he became a writer, Richard Peck taught high school for many years. Though he enjoyed it and liked his students, he became discouraged and quit. He began writing that same day, May 24, 1971. As well as teaching, Peck was also a lecturer on around the world cruises. It was during this career where he came up with many of his characters for his books. The

genres of most of his books are: horror, mystery, and historical realism. Peck says he likes to, "develop a theme where an individual steps away from a group to achieve independence". Peck was the first children's writer ever to receive the National Humanities Medal. He is described by the Washington Post as being, "America's best living author for young adults". Peck resides in Manhattan, NY

This author has no website.

Biography information:

www.carolhurst.com/authors/rspeck.html

www.bdd.com/bin/forums/teachers/peck.html

<http://us.penguin.com/nf/Author/AuthorPage>

Other Books by Richard Peck:

Amanda Miranda. New York: Dial Books, 1999.

Anonymously Yours. New York: Beech Tree Books, 1995.

Are You in the House Alone? New York: Puffin Books, 2000.

Bel-Air Bambi and the Mall Rats. New York: Delacorte, 1993.

Blossom Culp and the Sleep of Death. New York: Delacorte, 1986.

The Creative Word. New York: Random House, 1973.

Don't Look and It Won't Hurt. New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972.

Dreadful Future of Blossom Culp. New York:

Puffin Books, 2001.

Dreamland Lake. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973.

Fair Weather: A Novel. New York: Dial Books, 2001.

The Ghost Belonged to Me. New York: Viking, 1975.

Ghosts I Have Been. Santa Barbara, Calif.: Cornerstone Books, 1991.

The Great Interactive Dream Machine. New York: Dial, 1996.

Invitations to the World: Teaching and Writing for Young. New York: Dial Books, 2002.

The Last Safe Place on Earth. New York: Delacorte, 1995.

London Holiday. New York: Viking, 1998.

A Long Way from Chicago. New York: Dial, 1998.

Love and Death at the Mall. New York: Delacorte, 1994.

Lost in Cyberspace. New York: Dial, 1995.

Mindscapes: Poems for the Real World. New York: Delacorte, 1971.

Monster Night at Grandma's House. New York: Dial Books, 2003.

Princess Ashley. New York: Delacorte, 1987.

Remembering the Good Times. New York: Delacorte, 1985.

Representing Super Doll. New York: Viking, 1974.

River Between Us. New York: Dial Books, 2003.

Secrets of the Shopping Mall. New York: Delacorte, 1979.

Strays Like Us. New York: Dial, 1998.

This Family of Women. Boston: G.K. Hall, 1983.
Those Summer Girls I Never Met. New York: Delacorte, 1988.
Through a Brief Darkness. New York: Viking, 1973.
Transitions: a Literary Paper Casebook. New York, Random House, 1974.
Unfinished Portrait of Jessica. New York: Delacorte, 1991.
Urban Studies: A Research Paper Casebook. New York: Random House, 1974.
Voices After Midnight. New York: Delacorte, 1989.
Year Down Yonder. New York: Dial Books, 2000.

Awards:

- Margaret Alexander Edwards Award, 1990
- Are You in the House Alone?
 - Best Books of the Year citation, American Library Association, 1976
 - Edgar Allan Poe Award, 1976
 - SLJ's Best Books of the Year, 1976
 - New York Public Library Books for the Teen Age, 1982
 - ALA's Young Adult Services Division's Best of the Best Books, 1970-1983
- Close Enough to Touch
 - New York Public Library Books for the Teen Age, 1982
 - ALA Best Books for Young Adults, 1981
 - SLJ's Best Books for Young Adults, 1981

- Ghosts I Have Been
 - SLJ's Best Books of the Year, 1977
 - New York Times Outstanding Book of the Year, 1977
 - New York Public Library Books for the Teen Age, 1981
- Remembering the Good Times
 - ALA Notable Book, 1985
 - SLJ's Best Books of the Year, 1985
 - ALA Best Books for Young Adults, 1985

Annotation:

Richard Peck takes the reader back to the 1940's in his story of a young boy's family during World War II. Peck's story of hard times during the war enhances the importance of family. Davy and his family spend a lot of time together while Bill is gone. Either by waiting for a letter from Bill, working at his father's business, or just being a shoulder to lean on. Davy Bowman tells us his story of the good times before the war and how his friends and family were affected during the war. Davy's two heroes in his life are his father, Earl, and his brother, Bill. Earl was already in the war and now his older brother is going to war. Bill is training to be a pilot to fly B-17's bombers. There is a special closeness between these three men. For example, Earl and his boys enjoy playing the nightly games of hide-and-seek together with the neighbor kids and hanging out at the Phillips 66 station they own. Peck's descriptive writing style engrosses the reader. For example, there is a lot of detail given as the reader

is introduced to Miss Titus's ninety-seven year old mother. Peck describes her mother as having a face like the "Grand Canyon." She was bigger than Miss Titus, and somewhat more bald. He describes in detail her facial features. She had "craters in her nose," "several moles", and "small chin growths." (pg72).

The story is emotional. We feel empathy for Earl Bowman as his son heads off to war. The reader is drawn to his feelings of heartache. An example of this is when Davy finds his dad sitting alone in the dark thinking about Bill and looking sad. Another example is when Earl starts crying while telling Davy about his war days. We also feel empathy for Mr. Stonecypher. Mr. Stonecypher is a lonely, old neighbor man who lives in a house that looks "haunted". He lost his only son in the first war and is still mourning his loss. We feel empathy for him as he stands on his porch with Earl wanting to know "what this war's for" and "what the last one was for." After telling him this he showed his emotions by putting his face in his hands and sobbing.

As Peck takes the reader on a journey through the seasons during the war, you feel as if you are part of the Bowman family anticipating the day when Bill will come home from the war.

Genre:

Historical fiction

Point of View:

The story is told by Davy Bowman. Point of view is first person.

Theme:

Importance of family / Dealing with hard times

Interpretation of Title:

The title, "On the Wings of Heroes", is interpreted as Davy looking up to his father and brother. They are his heroes. "Wings" could mean the wings that a pilot gets after serving in a war or that he is riding on their wings.

Conflict:

The conflict in the story would be the people against the war. Times are tough during the war, not only economically, but emotionally. People long for their loved ones to return from the war, and veterans remember their days serving.

Conflict Resolution:

The conflict is resolved when the war is over and Bill Bowman and others return home to their loved ones.

Characters:

- Davy Bowman – One of the main characters. Boy around 10-12 years old. He is the younger brother who is adventurous, helpful to his community, and is a boy scout.
- Earl Bowman – Davy and Bill's father. World War I veteran that retired with an arm injury. He is a hard worker who owns a Phillips 66 gas station. He is a fun-loving dad with a good sense of humor.
- Joyce Bowman – Davy and Bill's mother. She goes to work at a blood bank during the war to help with her anxiety caused from her son being at war.

- Bill Bowman – Davy’s older brother. He’s around 17-19 years old. He is an Army Air force cadet who flies B-17 bombers in World War II. Very brave and courageous.
- Scott L. Tomlinson “Scooter” – Davy’s good friend and classmate, whose is very smart and good at math. His Dad ends up getting sent to war. He is a boy scout as well.
- Eulalia Titus – Replacement teacher in Davy’s class who was also Earl’s teacher in school. She is strict, cantankerous, and wise. Has a face like a walnut with glasses.
- Beverly – A girl in Davy’s class who is also the class bully. She has uncombed hair and dirty fingernails. She is known for stealing from the drugstore and the teachers.
- Doreen & Janis – Beverly’s two “stooges” in the class.
- Jewel Hiser – The neighborhood storyteller who is older than Earl Bowman. She claims she saw WWII coming “before Roosevelt”. She often tells the kids scary stories with graphic details. She has a great memory and used to play the piano for silent movies. She plays by ear and will play anything that isn’t new.

Setting:

This story takes place in a small town in Illinois in 1941 right before, and during, World War II.

Interest Level:

Grades: 4-7

Reading Level:

Grade 4

Booktalk:

"Before the war the evenings lingered longer, and it was always summer when it wasn't Halloween, or Christmas. Long, lazy light reached between the houses, and the whole street played our version of hide-and-seek, called only by olly-olly-in-free and supper time. Before I could keep up, I rode my brother's shoulders, hung in the crook of Dad's good arm. I rode them across the long shadows of afternoon, high over hedges, heading for home base, when our street was the world, before the war, when there wasn't a cloud in the sky."

After reading this introduction can you picture the scene in your head? Richard Peck is the author and he tells a wonderful story of what days were like in a small town before and during World War II. Once you get started you won't want to put the book down. Davy's Bowman's days before the war were filled with trouble and adventure. He was your normal 10 to 12 year old boy. He lived in a small town in Illinois with his Mom, Joyce, Dad, Earl and older brother, Bill. Davy looked up to his dad and brother, they were his heroes. They lived in a quiet, small town where all the neighbors felt like family. Evenings were spent playing outdoors, or sitting on Mrs. Hiser's porch listening to her tell scary stories. During the day, when he wasn't in Miss Landis's class, Davy could be found hanging around "Earl and Sons

Phillip 66 Gas & Oil Station". Earl Bowman, Davy's father, owned this business and was also just like a big kid. He always played games with kids and even joined in on the pranks with the teenagers. He could be found on Halloween hiding and waiting for them to try and pull a prank, and end up scaring them to death. Davy's brother, Bill, joined in on fun too, until it was time to go to war.

Davy's father felt sad about the war. He was sad to think of his own son leaving for World War II and possibly not returning. Davy's father had been in World War I and had to retire with an injured arm.

Then came December, 1941 Pearl Harbor was bombed. Davy's brother had been off training to fly B-17 bomber airplanes. His father's heart broke when he heard the news of the attack of Pearl Harbor. He knew then that his son would be going to war. Everything changed then. The whole attitude of the town was different. Davy and Scooter spent their free time collecting rubber, paper, milkweed and metal for war efforts instead of playing. Evenings weren't fun anymore since they had to have blackouts. To lift their spirits, they would admire shiny, new bicycles in the display case hoping that one would be under their Christmas tree. People were given only a certain amount of and sugar was low, which meant every kid's favorite drink, Kool-Aid, was out. Can you imagine drinking Kool-Aid without sugar? Most people were sad and grouchy during this time in Davy's town. Many women that had to go work in the factories since all the men were at war. One girl in Davy's class, Beverly, the class bully, was surprised to see her mother storm in the classroom one day. She

was one factory workers. She complained that she was wasting her "smoke break" by having to check on her unruly daughter. She considered school the babysitter for Beverly, who often got in trouble for stealing.

Bill came home at Christmas, and was soon an Army air force cadet. He wasn't home long before he had to head off for more training.

Back at school Davy's class ended up getting a new teacher, one that was very familiar to his father.

Eulalia Titus was her name and she had been Earl's teacher for eight years when he was a boy. She was old, big and looked like a walnut with glasses and a mustache. She going to make some big changes in the classroom and wasn't going to put up with Beverly or any other nonsense.

After Bill's training he was off to England to help with the war, flying B-17 bombers. By now it was 1944 and Davy and his family were always waiting to hear from Bill. Then it happened. Something that Earl Bowman had been dreading to hear. "Baby Snooks", the name of Bill's plane had gone down. Bill was missing. The family gathered together, including Grandma and Grandpa Riddle, to comfort each other.

Will one of Davy's heroes return? Will they find him? Is he alive? You'll need to read Richard Peck's fantastic story to find out.

Discussion Questions:

*Pre-reading activity:

Using the title and chapter titles within the text, have students predict content.

*Give information on the author.

Chapter 1: Home Base:

1. Who is considered the "biggest kid on the block"? (pg7)

Chapter 2: Smiley and Jewel Hiser:

2. What did Mrs. Hiser think was a "sign" that WWII was coming? (pg8)
3. Who was it that got his hand ripped off in a cornpicker? (pg11)

Chapter 3: very short / no questions

Chapter 4: The Last Halloween:

4. Explain what is meant by "pinning horns". (pg 18)
5. Why was Davy's brother, Bill, in St. Louis? (pg 19)

Chapter 5: The Dwindling Year:

6. What month was Pearl Harbor bombed? (pg23)

Chapter 6: Only Fifteen Shopping Days:

7. What is the one thing Davy hoped he would get from Bill for Christmas? (pg31)

Chapter 7: Stack of Pancakes Morning:

8. What were added to Davy's pedals to "build them up"? (pg33)

9. Why do you think Davy's bike is special to him? (pg35)

Chapter 8: Miss Mossman

10. What was the point of bringing dimes to class? (pg37)

11. What does OPA stand for? (pg37)

Chapter 9: Phillips 66 Station

12. What was the new order issued by OPA? (pg40)

Chapter 10: 8 to 5 Orphans

13. What drills did the class practice regularly? (pg44)

14. Who are the 8 to 5 orphans? (pg43)

15. Name Beverly's two sidekicks. (pg46)

Chapter 11: the Whole World was Golden

14. What song did the band play when they saw Bill? (pg50)

15. How do you think Bill's dad was feeling when Davy saw him sitting on his bed that night? (pg51)

Chapter 12: Scooter Put a Pin in Midway Islands

16. Who led the "calisthenics" for Bill in California? (pg53)

17. Scooter and Davy are collecting metal for the war what do they get from Mr. Stonecypher? (pg57)

Chapter 13: Dad could see in the dark

18. What did the civil defense make Davy's Dad? (pg58)
19. What was in the trunk in Mr.Stonecypher house? (pg63)

Chapter 14: Now the Government Wanted Milkweed

20. What was the purpose of milkweed? (pg64)
21. Davy and Scooter were looking for something in Eulalia Titus barn, what was it? (pg69)

Chapter 15: A Teacher Shortage

22. Why did the police come to Miss Landis's' classroom? (pg79)
23. There was a teacher shortage. Where did these teachers go? (pg81)

Chapter 16: Scooter's Opinion

24. Eulalia Titus was prepared for the class by having what in her purse? (pg85)

Chapter 17: War Stamp Thursday came around

25. Why do you think Miss Titus wanted to meet Beverly's parents? (pg91)
26. What's the connection between Davy's dad and Miss Titus? (pg93)

Chapter 18: Under Miss Titus

27. What sport does Miss Titus incorporate into arithmetic? (pg 95)
28. Davy's dad says Bill will be back wearing what? (pg97)

Chapter 19: Spring Took its Sweet Time Coming

29. What's the name of the new Cubmaster? (pg102)
30. Why does Scooter call Old Lady Graves a "hoarder"? (pg104)

Chapter 20: By that Summer of 1943

31. What were the 1943 pennies made of? (pg106)
32. Where did they get the jalopy? (pg109)

Chapter 21: But she would:

32. How many missions does Bill tell Miss Titus he will fly? (pg112)

Chapter 22: The Jalopy Parade

33. Who is the Jalopy Queen in the parade? (pg117)

Chapter 23: Four stars hung on our street

34. What was Bill training for in Oklahoma? (pg121)
35. Name the airplane Bill flew in? (pg122)

Chapter 24: What the government wanted now -

36. Where did Scooter have to move to? Why? (pg124 / 125)
37. Why do Davy's grandparents move in with his family? (pg126)

Chapter 25: All Europe Waited for the Invasion

38. Davy's grandma is driving his Mom crazy, so what does she do to solve this problem? (pg131)

Chapter 26: Droning Bombers Fanned Out Over Europe

39. Explain the different types of coupons for gas rationing? (pg132)

40. Why do the mobsters beat up Davy's Dad? (pg 133)
41. Do you think Davy felt scared riding with his Grandpa in the car? (pg136)

Chapter 27: When the Telegram Came

42. Who was it that signed for the letter saying Bill was missing? (pg137)
43. Why does Davy say the "milkweed" doesn't matter? (pg 138)

Chapter 28: It Was the Worst Time

44. Who is found sitting in the bathroom that night? (pg140)
45. How did Davy's father injure his arm? (pg141)
46. How do you think Davy feels when his father begins to cry? (pg 142)

Chapter 29: Grandma Stood Guard

47. What does the silver star mean? (pg143)
48. What happens in the middle of the night that startles everyone? (pg 144)

Chapter 30: We Got Bill Back

49. Who was it that found Bill in the field after his plane was shot down? (pg147)
50. When Davy's father grabs his shotgun and begins shooting it outside, how do you think he is feeling? (pg148)

Post reading discussion question:

Have you ever know someone who has been in a war?
Have they ever told you stories about it? Do you think

that Davy will follow in their footsteps and want to join the military?

Vocabulary:

Spirea (pg15) - any of various plants or shrubs belonging to the genus *Spiraea*, of the rose family, having clusters of small, white or pink flowers.

Solitary (pg27) - by itself, alone.

Aeronautics (pg29) - the science or art of flight.

Beaverboard (pg30) - light, stiff sheeting made of wood fiber and used in building, esp. for partitions or temporary structures.

Ration: (pg37) - a fixed allowance of provisions or food, esp. for soldiers or sailors or for civilians during a shortage.

Duration (pg 39) - the length of time something continues or exists.

Incendiary (pg44) - of or pertaining to the criminal setting on fire of property.

Forsythia (pg49) - a shrub with showy yellow flowers, which blossom on the bare branches in early spring.

Kapok (pg64) - the silky down that invests the seeds of a silk-cotton tree.

Jalopy (pg65) - an old automobile.

Fez (pg116) - a felt cap, usually of a red color, having the shape of a truncated cone, and ornamented with a long black tassel, worn by men in Egypt and North Africa.

Indiana Academic Standards met:

Language Arts: 4.1 / 5.1 / 5.3 / 6.1 / 6.3

Social Studies: 6.1

Anticipation Statements:

Before		Statement	After	
Agree	Disagree		Agree	Disagree
		1. The bombing of Pearl Harbor was the beginning of World War II.	<input type="checkbox"/>	
		2. School age children were not affected by the War.		
		3. During World War II many women worked in factories.		
		4. During times of need families come together.		
		5. A hero can be anyone.		
		6. Rubber, paper, and metal had to be collected for war efforts in 1941-1943.		
		7. 1943 pennies were made of zinc and steel.		

Read Aloud Passages:

Read Aloud #1 - pg. 137

Chapter 27: When the Telegram Came:

“When the telegram came Grandma was there to sign for it. She called Dad from the station and Mom from the blood bank, and she didn’t open it. I came in from school, and there they were, the three of them with the yellow envelope in Dad’s hand.”

This importance of family comes through in this passage. A telegram finally arrives and it’s important that the family is all together as Grandma opens the letter revealing Bill is missing.

Read Aloud #2 - pg.51

Chapter 11: The Whole World was Golden

“A hand rested on the pillow, and the streetlamp caught the diamond glint in the Masonic ring. Dad was sitting on Bill’s bed. There was enough light to see he had Bill’s letter sweater pulled over his shoulders. Dad, sitting there in the dark, where Bill had been.”

The importance of this passage is the feeling of heartache that Davy’s dad has while Bill is at war. Davy realizes how sad his dad is as he holds Bills’ letter in the dark.”

Read -Alikes:

"If you like "On the Wings of Heroes", you'll love.....

- A Year Down Yonder - Richard Peck - This is a story that takes place in Illinois during recession about a girl who has to live with her Grandmother.
- A Long Way from Chicago - Richard Peck - A historical fiction novel that takes place during the recession. This story also takes place in Illinois and is about a boy living with his sister and Grandmother.
- Here Lies the Librarian - Richard Peck - This story takes place in a small town in Indiana in 1914. Eleanor is a fourteen year old tomboy who is "automobile enthusiast."
- Lawn Boy - Gary Paulsen - YHBA 2009 - 2010, 6-8 nominee. Story of a twelve year old boy who is in the moneymaking business. This book fits into the same interest / reading level.
- The Invention of Hugo Cabret - Brian Selznick - This story takes place in 1931 in a train station in Paris. The main character is a twelve year old boy that is an orphan.

Across the Curriculum Connections:

Language Arts / Social Studies: Sharing Family Stories

- The story of Pearl Harbor provides a way to discuss the importance and power of storytelling using personal experience and remembrance. Discuss with students how oral history makes historical events more real for us. Students can then interview family members and share their histories.

Standards: Language arts: writing 3.5 / 3.6 / 4.5 / 4.6 / 5.5 / 5.6

Listening & speaking: 3.7 / 4.7 / 5.7

Materials needed: paper / writing utensils

Art: Draw from Memory

- Using your memory draw a particular scene from the story that was important to you. Was it when Davy and Scooter were admiring the Schwinn bike? When Davy is listening to stories told by Mrs. Hiser? Complete your picture with a description of that particular part.

Standards: Fine arts / Visual Arts: Creating Art: 4.6 / 5.6

Materials Needed: paper / memory / crayons or markers / textbook for reference

Book Activities:

Book related activity #1:

Character Comparison Chart:

This activity is intended for individuals. This activity will be comparing differences and similarities between two characters in the book. Before the activity do an example for the students on the board. Pick two students, write their names, and the words differences and similarities. Do this together as a class so they get the idea of the activity.

Materials:

- copy of text
- student handout

Standards met: Language Arts / Reading

comprehension: 3.3 / 3.6 / 4.2 / 4.3 / 4.6 / 5.3 / 5.6 / 6.3 / 6.6

Name: _____

Character Comparison Chart

Directions: Choose two characters from the book, "On the Wings of Heroes." Complete the chart below. On the left, list your two characters. In the middle, and on the right side, list their similarities and differences.

Character #1	Similarities	Differences
Character #2		

Character Comparison Rubric

Name: _____

I. Chart included:	
A. Characters	
B. Similarities	
C. Differences	
	/ 25
II. Neatness	/ 10
Total Percentage	/ 35 %

Book Related Activity #2

Portrait of a Hero

Create a portrait of someone you consider a personal hero.

Getting Started:

Before you begin drawing, think about the word hero and what it means to you. What makes someone a hero? What qualities does a hero possess? Make a list of words and phrases about heroes on a sheet of paper (brave, unselfish, helpful, courageous, strong, daring, risk-taker, admirable, etc.). Think of people who have become famous in history because of their heroic acts. When your picture is finished, sign, date, and title it in the bottom right-hand corner. On an index card, write a short explanation of who is shown in your picture and why you consider this person a hero.

Materials: 12x18 inch white paper; index card, crayons, and a photograph of someone you admire.

Standards met:

Fine Arts / Visual Arts: creating art: 3.7 / 4.7 / 5.7

Language Arts / Writing: 3.5 / 3.6 / 4.5 / 4.6 / 5.5 / 5.6

Portrait of a Hero Rubric

Name: _____

I. Portrait:	
A. Neatness	/ 10
B. Use of color	/ 10
C. Explanation of hero	/ 10
	/ 30
Total Percentage	/ 30 %

Resources:

Title: On the Wings of Heroes

Author: Richard Peck

Author's Homepage:

No website

Publisher's webpage:

www.us.penguin.com

Publisher's webpage for the author or author's books:

<http://us.penguin.com/nf/Author/AuthorPage/0,,1000025091,00.html>

Other Web Resources:

Carol Hurst's Children's Literature Site:

<http://www.carolhurst.com/authors/rpeck.html>

Carroll County, Maryland's website

<http://www.carr.org/mae/peck/peck-inf.htm>

Busy Teachers Café website:

http://busyteacherscafe.com/teacher_resources/literacy_pages/literary_elements.htm

Education Oasis website:

http://www.educationoasis.com/curriculum/GO_pdf/character_traits_wordbank.pdf

Indiana Academic Standards website:

<http://dc.doe.in.gov/Standards/AcademicStandards/index.shtml>

Marion County Public Library:

<http://www.imcpl.org/>