

# Richard peck: a long way from chicago essay sample



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

For my second book report, I chose to read *A Long Way from Chicago*, a fiction novel by Richard Peck. The main characters are Grandma Dowdel, her grandchildren Joey Dowdel, and his sister, Mary Alice. Joey and Mary Alice lived with their parents in Chicago and every August from 1929 until the summer of 1935, they spent at least a week with their Grandma Dowdel. Grandma Dowdel lived in a small town between Chicago and St. Louis during most of her life and the Great Depression.

Each chapter in *A Long Way from Chicago* tells a different story during one of the visits to Grandma Dowdel by Joey and Mary Alice. The conflict in each of the chapters is internal. The internal conflicts are Grandma Dowdel's outlandish behavior as she plots to get even with the Cowgill boys, the sheriff, the banker and his wife, and other town folks in the seven chapters. The town's people are shown as trying to take advantage of her and her grandchildren as well as some of the poorer people that live nearby.

Each of the seven chapters contains a different internal conflict but she resolves them the same. Grandma Dowdel had a big heart and went out of her way to help the town folks who were in need. She used wit, her sharp tongue, and cleverness to plan an impressive funeral for Shotgun Cheatham, to feed the drifters, arrange the elopement of Vandalia Eubanks and Junior Stubbs, and give Joey a ride in Buchanan's biplane.

My favorite part of the book occurs in the last chapter. The time now is 1942 the beginning of World War II and Joey has not seen his Grandma Dowdel since the summer of 1939. He is now twenty-two years old, enlisted in the Army Air Corps, and is on his way to flight school. Since Grandma Dowdel did

not have a telephone, Joey had to send her a telegram letting her know his troop train would be passing by her house although it would not stop. The troop train has been delayed many times but as it nears Grandma Dowdel's house Joey sees the house lit up like a jack-o-lantern with a light in every window. Joey sees Grandma Dowdel waving her hand back and forth, as he waves back knowing she could never clearly see him.

My favorite character is Joey Dowdel. He loves his Grandma and is willing to do anything to help her. Joey helps Grandma Dowdel with the schemes to get even with the town folks and in return, he flew in a biplane and learned to drive a car. I enjoyed seeing how he grew up each summer and all the adventures he had each year.

When I was younger, I spent all my holidays and summers with my Grandmama. She planned many activities for me but I am sad to say nothing as exciting as Grandma Dowdel did in the book A Long Way from Chicago. Often my Grandmama took me to visit my cousins, ladies of her Church group, and older folks in the neighborhood.

I truly enjoyed the book and learned about what it was like living and trying to find a job during the depression years. Mr. Peck made me see the difference in my life today. He told of how hard it was to live during the Depression through humor. Many people lost their jobs, houses and nearly everyone was poor.

Mr. Peck told a story of love. He writes about the good-hearted love of Grandma Dowdel and how she went out of her way to help those in need. It

is easy to put myself in this book and imagine myself riding in a biplane, learning how to drive a car and helping Grandma Dowdel with her schemes.

In my opinion, Mr. Peck is a wonderful author who showed that love and helping the less fortunate is important in our lives. A Long way from Chicago is definitely a book that I would read again. I know whoever reads this book will love it.