



The River Between Us

By Richard Peck

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The year is 1861. Civil war is imminent and Tilly Pruitt's brother, Noah, is eager to go and fight on the side of the North. With her father long gone, Tilly, her sister, and their mother struggle to make ends meet and hold the dwindling Pruitt family together. Then one night a mysterious girl arrives on a steamboat bound for St. Louis. Delphine is unlike anyone the small river town has even seen. Mrs. Pruitt agrees to take Delphine and her dark, silent traveling companion in as boarders. No one in town knows what to make of the two strangers, and so the rumors fly. Is Delphine's companion a slave? Could they be spies for the South? Are the Pruitts traitors? A masterful tale of mystery and war, and a breathtaking portrait of the lifelong impact one person can have on another.

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The River Between Us By Richard Peck Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Grade 7 Up-This historical novel set at the beginning of the Civil War actually opens in 1916, as 15-year-old Howard Leland Hutchings recounts his trip in a Model T to visit his father's childhood home in Grand Tower, IL. When he and his younger brothers meet the four elderly people who raised their father, the novel shifts to 1861, and the narrator shifts to 15-year-old Tilly Pruitt, the boys' grandmother. When a steamboat from New Orleans brings two mysterious young ladies, Mama offers them room and board, and the Pruitts' lives are forever changed. Fair and beautiful Delphine Duval, with her fancy dresses and high-society ways, fascinates the family. And what of Calinda, the darker-skinned young woman? Could she be Delphine's slave? On the eve of his 16th birthday, Tilly's twin brother, Noah, leaves to join the Union troops at Camp Defiance and Mama, distraught, sends Tilly and Delphine to bring him home. It is here that Tilly learns of Delphine's heritage. She is a quadroon, part of the colored family of a rich white man. Her mother sent her daughters away from New Orleans, hoping Delphine can pass for white. The novel ends with a return to 1916 and Howard's finding out his father's true parentage. In this thoroughly researched novel, Peck masterfully describes the female Civil War experience, the subtle and not-too-subtle ways the country was changing, and the split in loyalty that separated towns and even families. Although the book deals with some weighty themes, it is not without humor. A scene involving strapping on a corset is worthy of Grandma Dowdel herself.

Connie Tyrrell Burns, Mahoney Middle School, South Portland, ME

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From [Booklist](#)

Gr. 7-12. At the start of the Civil War two mysterious young women get off a boat in a small town in southern Illinois, and 15-year-old Tilly Pruitt's mother takes them in. Who are they? Is the darker-complexioned woman the other woman's slave? Tilly's twin brother, Noah, falls in love with one of them--rich, stylish, worldly Delphine, who shows Tilly a world of possibilities beyond her home. When Noah runs away to war, Tilly and Delphine go after him, find him in the horror of an army tent hospital, and bring him back; but their world is changed forever. Peck's spare writing has never been more eloquent than in this powerful mystery in which personal secrets drive the plot and reveal the history. True to Tilly's first-person narrative, each sentence is a scrappy, melancholy, wry evocation of character, time, and place, and only the character of Delphine's companion, Calinda, comes close to stereotype. A final historical note and a framing device--a grandson writing 50 years after the story takes place--make the reading even better, the revelations more astonishing. It's a riveting story that shows racism everywhere and young people facing war, not sure what side to be on or why. For companion books, see "Civil War--An Update" in the September 2003 issue of *Book Links*. *Hazel Rochman*

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Review

It's a riveting story that shows racism everywhere and young people facing war, not sure what side to be on or why. (Booklist, starred review)

Peck reaches new depth with this Civil War-era novel. . . (Publishers Weekly, starred review)

A rich tale full of magic, mystery, and surprise. (Kirkus Reviews, starred review)

Historical fiction fans should enter this at the top of the must-read list. (The Bulletin of the Center for

Children's Books, starred review)

The harsh realities of war are brutally related in a complex, always surprising plot that resonates on multiple levels. (The Horn Book, starred review)

This unusual Civil War novel really boosts Peck's credentials as America's best living author for young adults. (The Washington Post)

Unforgettable characters and handsome prose make this book one you won't want to miss. (Children's Literature)

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Martina Joseph:

Why don't make it to be your habit? Right now, try to ready your time to do the important action, like looking for your favorite book and reading a reserve. Beside you can solve your long lasting problem; you can add your knowledge by the publication entitled The River Between Us. Try to make book The River Between Us as your buddy. It means that it can to become your friend when you feel alone and beside that course make you smarter than before. Yeah, it is very fortunated in your case. The book makes you a lot more confidence because you can know almost everything by the book. So , let's make new experience and knowledge with this book.

Richard Ybarra:

Playing with family in a very park, coming to see the coastal world or hanging out with good friends is thing that usually you may have done when you have spare time, in that case why you don't try thing that really opposite from that. One particular activity that make you not experiencing tired but still relaxing, trilling like on roller coaster you have been ride on and with addition details. Even you love The River Between Us, you may enjoy both. It is fine combination right, you still want to miss it? What kind of hang type is it? Oh occur its mind hangout folks. What? Still don't buy it, oh come on its known as reading friends.

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