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Grandfather's Dance (Sarah, Plain And Tall)



Synopsis

Jack leans back on Grandfather's shoulder. Aunt Mattie's knitting needles click in the dark. The moon rises. The candle flickers in the gentle prairie wind. I close my eyes to keep everything there. Could anything be more perfect than a prairie wedding? Cassie Witting doesn't think so, for her sister Anna's wedding brings two lovebirds together, aunts from faraway Maine, a long white dress with a wedding veil, dancing under a clear blue sky, and a world that smells of roses. As the Witting family comes together for this most special day, Cassie sees that life brings the change of seasons, brother Jack on Grandfather's lap, joy, sorrow, and a special dance only Grandfather does.

Book Information

Lexile Measure: 450 (What's this?)

Series: Sarah, Plain and Tall (Book 5)

Paperback: 96 pages

Publisher: HarperCollins; Reprint edition (December 26, 2007)

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Average Customer Review: 4.9 out of 5 stars See all reviews (33 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #50,420 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #21 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > Stepfamilies #95 in Books > Children's Books > Geography & Cultures > Where We Live > Farm Life #164 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > Multigenerational

Age Range: 6 - 10 years

Grade Level: 2 - 5

Customer Reviews

All right, class. Altogether now. How does one go about getting kids interested in historical fiction? Any ideas? I heard somebody mentioning starting the kids on that kind of thing early on. Very good! It's an easy enough task to read historical picture books to children before they can read on their own, certainly. Just load your bookshelves with some Patricia Polacco, some Patricia McKissack, and maybe a dash of Allan Say for good measure. The minute the children want to read their own

books, however, you may find filling their historical fiction needs a bit trickier. If it isn't related to "The Time Warp Trio", parents often find their bookshelves sadly lacking in that whole early chapter book historical fiction genre. So what author exists to rescue you from this dire plight? Who else but Patricia MacLachlan, author of "Sarah, Plain and Tall"! The series that begin with this pleasantly slim novel has added yet another title to its mix. "Grandfather's Dance" follows the Witting family's adventures as everyone prepares for Anna, narrator of the first book, and her wedding. Cassie is delighted. Her older sister Anna is getting married and everything in the home is far more exciting and unusual as a result. Usually Anna lives quietly with just her mother and father, her younger brother Jack, and their grandfather alongside the prairie. Now, however, three aunts are coming to stay, to say nothing of an uncle and a host of other relatives for the festivities. Alongside this large story comes the small tale of Jack's love for his grandfather and Cassie's love for the both of them. Grandfather knows that his time is coming soon, and when at last he dies Cassie must help Jack through his grief into acceptance.

Just as spring begins on the prairie, young Cassie Witting's life is about to change. Cassie's older sister, Anna, is getting married. This event is the stimulus for a flurry of activity. In addition to wedding preparations, the Witting family must also get ready to receive family from back east, her mama's brother William and a collection of sisters referred to as "the aunts." Even her brother Caleb will return from school for the event. Cassie is excited about her sister's wedding. She contemplates what it might be like to get married one day and resolves that her dog would be the perfect husband. In the midst of all the arrangements and family reunions, Cassie notices that Grandfather has become short tempered. Her younger brother Jack (who refers to himself as "Doggie") loves Grandfather better than anyone else. This is evident by the way Jack imitates his Grandfather's every move. Cassie doesn't understand the significance of Grandfather's request to have Cassie dress up and have a pretend wedding so that he can attend. Cassie eventually realizes the reason for Grandfather's strange behavior. Reading this book, one is privy to tender family moments, sharing both happy and difficult times. MacLachlan uses a string of symbols to signal the changes the family is experiencing. Among the symbols are the new family car, Sarah's wedding veil, and Grandfather's black hat. The reader recognizes the family's sense of togetherness. This gives them the strength they need to weather the changing seasons of their own lives and the "life" of the Witting family. Although part of a collection of stories beginning with Sarah, Plain and Tall, the reader need not have read previous books to appreciate this touching final installment in the collection.

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