

Packet #4

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This packet is meant to be done for one week. It is very similar to what we already do in class.

YOU SHOULD BE READING EVERYDAY!

Read

Excerpt from *The Mouse in the Milk*—1930

- 1 So now Mary Alice was **sulking** somewhere. Grandma’s breathing was steady, the way it got before she started snoring. Then I heard a horse clopping past.
- 2 That was no rare thing around here. But I noticed the silence when the horse stopped outside. Then right away heels kicked its sides, and the horse galloped off. It was a sound right out of a Tom Mix movie. I was reaching for a puzzle part that was just blue sky when a flash of light filled the bay window. Then an explosion shook the house and made my puzzle jump. It wasn’t as loud as the time Grandma squeezed off two rounds right here in the front room. But it brought her out of her chair.
- 3 Like a ship under sail, she made for the front door. Mary Alice appeared from somewhere, and we both looked around Grandma into the night. You could barely see a stump out by the road. It was the post that had held the mailbox. But the mailbox was gone—in several directions. We heard a piece of metal slide down the shingles of the roof, bounce off the gutter, and fall through the snowball bushes.
- 4 Somebody on horseback had blown Grandma’s mailbox sky high. The Fourth of July was over, but there were still plenty of loose fireworks around. And this was no small charge, not a baby-waker or even a torpedo. This could have been the work of a cherry bomb.
- 5 Grandma planted her big fists on her big hips, and her jaw clenched in a familiar way.
- 6 “Cowgills,” she said, like that explained it.
- 7 Grandma slept in a room downstairs to save herself the stairs. Mary Alice and I had rooms upstairs. They were sparsely furnished, with iron bedsteads and a lot of dead bugs on the sills. After I got used to how quiet the country was at night, I slept good there. But I lay awake at night, recalling the sound when Grandma’s mailbox was blown to **smithereens**. I was ten, the age when things blowing up interested me, but I wondered who’d dare do this to Grandma.
- 8 My eyelids drooped, and it was morning. The smell of breakfast wafted up from the kitchen. You had to be downstairs on time and in your place, but Grandma’s breakfasts were worth it. Pancakes and corn syrup, fried ham and potatoes and onions, anything you wanted and as much.
- 9 Mary Alice and I were at the table, and Grandma was at the stove turning one last round of pancakes, when we got a visitor on the back porch. We all looked. The screen on the door blurred her, but it was Grandma’s

old enemy Mrs. Effie Wilcox. She didn't make free to rap on the door. She just stood out on the porch in a faded apron and broken boots, working her hands. "Mrs. Dowdel, whoeee," she called in a tragic voice.

10 Grandma strolled over to the door. "What now?" she said through screen wire.

11 Mrs. Wilcox moaned. "First of all," she said, "can I use it?"

12 She nodded down the back path to the cobhouse and the privy, and she didn't mean the cobhouse.

13 "Feel free," Grandma said. "Take a pew."

14 But Mrs. Wilcox just stood there on the porch, wringing her hands. "I'm so nervous, I don't know if--"

15 "What's come over you?" Grandma said in her least interested voice.

16 Mrs. Wilcox whimpered. "Send them kids out of your kitchen so I can tell you."

17 "They're having their breakfast," Grandma said, "and they're from Chicago, so they've heard everything."

18 "Well, it was last night," Mrs. Wilcox said. "They come on my place and wrenched up my you-know-what by the posts and flung it all over my yard."

19 "They knocked over your privy three months ahead of Halloween?" Grandma was interested at last. "What's the world coming to?"

20 "That's what I said," Mrs. Wilcox replied. "I'm too nervous to live. All the laws of civilization has broke down, and town life is getting too dangerous. My only **consolation** is that there's a prayer meeting at church tomorrow night. And I've got me some praying to do."

21 "Do that," Grandma said. But Mrs. Wilcox couldn't wait another minute. She darted off the porch and down the path to our privy.

22 Grandma settled into her chair to smother her last pancake with corn syrup. Then once again she said, "Cowgills."

23 Presently, Mary Alice slipped down from her chair and headed outside. When she got to the screen door, Grandma said, "I wouldn't use the privy all morning if I was you."

24 That next morning when I came into the kitchen, a sight stopped me dead in the door. Behind me, Mary Alice pulled up short too. Next to a box of shells, Grandpa Dowdel's old double-barreled Winchester Model 21 was on the kitchen table, along with a greasy rag, like Grandma meant to clean it. Just the sight of the gun made my ears ring. Then I saw somebody besides Grandma was in the kitchen, over by the door.

- 25 He was a big, tall galoot of a kid with narrow eyes. His gaze kept flitting to the shotgun. The uniform he had on was all white with a cap to match. In his hand was a wire holder for milk bottles. He was ready to make his escape, but Grandma was saying, “I hope I have better luck with your milk today than the last batch. I found a dead mouse in your delivery yesterday.”
- 26 The kid’s narrow eyes widened. “Naw you never,” he said.
- 27 “Be real careful about calling a customer a liar,” she remarked. “I had to feed that milk to the cat. And the mouse too, of course.”
- 28 “Naw,” the kid said, reaching around for the knob on the screen door behind him.
- 29 Grandma was telling one of her whoppers. If she’d found a mouse in the milk, she’d have exploded like the mailbox. She was telling a **whopper**, and I wondered why.
- 30 “And another thing,” she said. “I won’t be needing delivery tomorrow, neither milk nor cream. I’m going away.”
- 31 First we’d heard of it. Mary Alice nudged me hard.
- 32 “I’ll be gone tonight and all day tomorrow, and I don’t want the milk left out where it’ll sour. I won’t pay for it. I’m taking my grandkids on a visit to my cousin Leota Shrewsbury.”
- 33 Another whopper, and a huge one. Grandma off on a jaunt and us with her? I didn’t think so. She didn’t do things that cost. And she never told anybody her business.
- 34 Turning from the stove, she pretended surprise at seeing Mary Alice and me there, though she had eyes in the back of her head. “Why, there’s my grandkids now.” She pointed us out with a spatula. “They’re from Chicago. Gangs run that town, you know,” she told the kid. “My grandson’s in a gang, so you don’t want to mess with him. He’s meaner than he looks.”
- 35 I hung in the doorway, bug-eyed and short. She was saying I —Joey Dowdel —was a tough guy from Chicago, and this kid was twice my size. He could eat me for lunch.
- 36 “This here’s Ernie Cowgill,” she said, finishing off the introductions. With a sneer at me, Ernie Cowgill disappeared through the door and stomped off the porch.
- 37 “Grandma,” I croaked, “you’ll get me killed.”
- 38 She waved that away. “I just said that for your protection. He’ll be scared of you now. He’d believe anything. He’s only in fourth grade.”

39 “Grandma, he’s at least sixteen.”

40 “That’s right. And still in fourth grade,” she said. “He’s the **runt** of the Cowgill litter. He’s got three older brothers, and they’re the big bruisers. They’re the ones you wouldn’t want to meet up with in a dark alley.”

41 She swept shotgun, shells, and the greasy rag off the kitchen table and put them all back behind the woodbox. Then she nodded at Mary Alice to set the table for breakfast.

42 When we sat down to eat, I said, “Grandma, what was the shotgun for?”

43 “Bait,” she said.

44 “Who’s Cousin Leota Shrewsbury?” Mary Alice asked.

45 “Who?” Grandma said.

Excerpted from *A Long Way from Chicago* by Richard Peck, published by Puffin Books.

Annotations

Name:

Date:

Think Questions: A Long Way from Chicago

Instructions: Remember to use complete sentences and evidence from the text.

1. How do the narrator and his sister respond to life in the country? What differences does the narrator notice? Answer in a few sentences, citing details from the text in your response.

2. What kind of impression do people in rural Illinois have of Chicago? How accurate is this viewpoint? Explain, citing what is directly stated in the excerpt as well what can be inferred.

3. Why might the narrator's grandma have lied to Ernie Cowgill?
Explain using evidence and inferences from the text.

4. What is the meaning of **sulking** ? Write your best definition of the word here.

5. What does **consolation** mean? What are synonyms of this word?
Write as many as you can think of, then consult a thesaurus to verify.



Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl



Read

*Mar. 29-May 20, 1944

Pages: 172-213

*Page numbers might be wrong, pay attention
to the dates.

Chapter Questions

Name: _____ Date: _____

Book: Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl

Reading Assignment: Mar. 29-May 20, 1944 Pgs.172-213

Chapter Questions: You are in charge of answering the questions from the chapters read. Use complete sentences when answering the questions.

1. What is a “food cycle” and how do they affect the people in the annex?

2. What does Anne mean when she says she wants “to go on living even after [her] death”? Why is this hope ironic?

3. What new precautions must the Franks and van Daans take after the burglary scare? Provide examples from the text in your answer.

4. Why does Anne imagine her friends' reactions to her kissing Peter? How does she explain it in her imagination?

