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Review: Echo

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****Echo**

By Pam Munoz Ryan

Scholastic Press/Scholastic, 2015

DESCRIPTION:

Introduced by a fantasy trio of sisters, a witch, and an evil king, four stories are woven together by “a thread of destiny,” carried along by a simple pocket harmonica to make up this page-turning epic. From locations as varied as a labor camp in Germany, an orphanage in Pennsylvania, and an orange grove in California, the three historical fiction tales are set during World War II. The king’s spell is broken in the twentieth century through the bravery of a Japanese soldier fighting for a country that holds his own parents in an internment camp. This blending of stories in a smashing conclusion shines with the light of hope for all those who are lonely, grieving, or fearful. It is indeed a masterpiece.

CRITIQUE:

Ryan’s reputation is already established among fans of children’s literature--be they children or adults. Multi-award winner that she is, balancing the stories of each of these main characters must have been a challenge. However, she accomplishes the feat with some readers (the adults) sharing a tear-studded ending. This reviewer required hearing (again) Gershwin’s rendering of *Rhapsody in Blue* just to imagine what the book’s version was like. The only question here is how many tweens are going to read 585 pages? Probably those who want to know what happens at the end.

RELATED SUBJECTS:

Adoption, America, Armed Forces, Brothers and sisters, Death, Education, Family, Family love, Family relationships, Father-daughter relationships, Father-son relationships, Friendship, Gardening, Germans, Germany, Grief, Harmonicas, Japanese Americans, Jews, Music, Orphanages, Orphans, Prejudice, School, Siblings, Soldiers, Survival, Talents, World War II

CHARACTER THEMES:

Caring, Citizenship, Cooperation, Courage, Craftsmanship, Creativity, Determination, Devotion, Diversity, Duty, Family love, Family loyalty, Forgiveness, Friendliness, Friendship, Hope, Initiative, Inspiration, Kindness, Knowledge, Love, Neighborliness, Obedience, Pride, Respect, Responsibility, Sacrifice, Tolerance, Work ethic

AWARDS:

Amazon Editor’s Picks, Best Books of the Year, Americas Award, Audie Award, Best Children’s Book of the Year, Best of the Best Books, Booksource Scout Award, California Young Reader Medal, Capitol Choice (DC), Children’s Choices, Cybils Award, Dorothy Canfield Fisher Children’s Book Award, Garden State Teen Book Award, Golden Archer Award, Grand Canyon Reader Award, Great Lakes Great Books Award, Indian paintbrush Book Award, International Latino Book Award, Iowa Teen Award, Kentucky Bluegrass Award, Kirkus Prize, Maine Student Book Award, Mark Twain Award, Nene Award (HI), Newbery Honor Award, New York Historical Society Children’s History Book Prize, NYPL 100 titles for reading and sharing, New York Times Notable Children’s Books, North Carolina

Young Adult Book Award, Notable Books for a Global Society, Notable Books in the Language Arts, Notable Social Studies Trade Books for Young, Odyssey Honor, Parents Choice Award, Pennsylvania Young Readers' Choice Award, Prairie Pasque Award, Publisher's Weekly Best Children's Books, Quahog Book Award, Rebecca Caudill Young Readers' Book Award, Sunshine State Young Reader's Award, Virginia Reader's Choice Award, Volunteer State Book Award, William Allen White Children's Book Award, Young Hoosier Book Award

From the Mixed-Up Files of Mrs. Basil E. Frankweiler

By E. L. Konigsburg (author and illustrator)

Dell Publishing Co., Inc., 1967

DESCRIPTION:

When Claudia Kincaid has had enough of being the elder sister in a family of younger brothers, she decides to run away. However, her itinerary does not include mucking about miserably until found, nor does it include going solo. Claudia enjoys planning almost as much as going, so she has carefully planned her sibling-of-choice-in-escape as brother, Jamie. Always with some cash stashed away, and a mind for the minutiae, Jamie is all in, as long as the journey is complicated, not boring. That is how two children from Greenwich end up hiding away in the Metropolitan Museum of Art and sort of falling in love with two older ladies--one made of stone.

CRITIQUE:

This classic title reached its fiftieth birthday in 2017 *without* ever having been out of print, and *with* having visitors still asking to follow the route same route chosen by "Lady Claudia" and "Sir James" when they visit the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Although the two children do take some liberties with truth and cash, for the most part, the emphasis is on being honest and caring for costly museum artifacts. Certainly, Claudia stresses education while the twosome are roaming free, and Jamie is a stickler for paying their way and being thrifty. In the end, they do run away, but they are taken home--in fine style.

RELATED SUBJECTS:

Art, Artists, Brothers and sisters, Exploring, Family relationships, Humor, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Museums, New York (NY), Problem solving, Prodigies, Research, Runaways, Sculptor/Sculpture

CHARACTER THEMES:

Cleverness, Confidence, Cooperation, Courage, Creativity, Dependability, Family loyalty, Humor, initiative, Inventiveness, Maturity, Respect, Responsibility, Self-control, Spunk, Trust, Trustworthiness

AWARDS:

100 Best Young Adult Books of All Time, 100 Great Children's books, Alaska Battle of the Books, Dorothy Canfield Fisher Children's Book Award, Flicker Tale Children's Book Award (ND), John Newbery Medal, Junior Library Guild Selection, Notable Children's Books, Quahog Book Award (ME),

Sequoyah Book Award (OK), William Allen White Children's book Award,
Wisconsin Battle of the Books