

The Egg Thief

Alane Adams

Lauren Gallegos, Illustrator

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This Depression-era tale gently imparts lessons about persistence, honesty, and helping those in need.

Alane Adams's *The Egg Thief*, the second picture book based on the childhood tales of the author's father, expertly transmits a sense of place and the universality of moral dilemmas.

In the winter of 1929 in rural Pennsylvania, a young boy named Georgie reluctantly heads out to the barn to collect eggs as part of his morning chores. When he gets there, the grumpy chickens have nothing for him, and he is further startled by a giant wolf in the corner. Luckily, the wolf turns out to be merely a scruffy, starving hound, who has eaten up all the eggs and whom Georgie instantly befriends.

Georgie and his new dog, now dubbed Buster, set out to find replacement eggs to help bolster the likelihood of Georgie's family adopting the dog. They encounter challenges, both physical and mental, which provide a jumping-off point for discussions with young readers about how they might handle the situations that Georgie and Buster face.

Artwork clearly evokes the hardscrabble life of Georgie's town during the Great Depression; little details like the holes in the boy's boots, the ramshackle fence and roof of a neighbor's home, and the worn wooden table and floors in Mama's kitchen all provide clues. Illustrator Lauren Gallegos also employs a palette of muted earth tones that add to the hard times mood, though she tempers these with humorous portraits of imperious chickens and disgruntled ducks and a sprinkling of pages that feature a bright white background.

The Egg Thief successfully integrates text and images to tell a historical tale and gently impart lessons about persistence, honesty, and helping those in need.

RACHEL JAGARESKI (February 13, 2017)

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