



Counting on Grace

By Elizabeth Winthrop

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1910. Pownal, Vermont. At 12, Grace and her best friend Arthur must leave school and go to work as a “doffers” on their mothers’ looms in the mill. Grace’s mother is the best worker, fast and powerful, and Grace desperately wants to help her. But she’s left handed and doffing is a right-handed job. Grace’s every mistake costs her mother, and the family. She only feels capable on Sundays, when she and Arthur receive special lessons from their teacher. Together they write a secret letter to the Child Labor Board about underage children working in Pownal. A few weeks later a man with a camera shows up. It is the famous reformer Lewis Hine, undercover, collecting evidence for the Child Labor Board. Grace’s brief acquaintance with Hine and the photos he takes of her are a gift that changes her sense of herself, her future, and her family’s future.

From the Hardcover edition.

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

Starred Review. Grade 5-8—Inspired by Lewis Hines haunting photograph of a French Canadian girl in Vermont in 1910, Winthrops compelling story vividly captures the mill experience. Grace Forcier and her friend Arthur, both 12 and the best readers in the mill school, are forced to suspend their educations to doff bobbins for their mothers frames in the spinning room. While this is difficult for left-handed Grace, Arthur is desperate to escape the stuffy, sweaty, linty, noisy factory. Miss Lesley, their teacher, helps them write a letter to the National Child Labor Committee about underage kids, as young as eight, working in their mill. Grace understands the dilemma a response will cause. If the children don't work, the families won't have enough money to survive. Lewis Hine is the answer to the letter. He comes and photographs the mill rats, as the kids are called; no one will believe the conditions without pictures. Arthur, however, can wait no longer to carry out his escape plan. In a horrifying scene, he jams his right hand into the gearbox of the frame, painfully mangling it and losing two fingers. Miss Lesley's interference causes her to be fired, and she encourages Grace to be the substitute teacher, leaving readers with a sense that she will escape the mill and have a better life. Much information on early photography and the workings of the textile mills is conveyed, and history and fiction are woven seamlessly together in this beautifully written novel. Readers won't soon forget Grace.—Connie Tyrrell Burns, Mahoney Middle School, South Portland, ME

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From [Booklist](#)

Gr. 6-9. Inspired by a Lewis Hine photo of a child at work in a Vermont cotton mill in the early twentieth century, Winthrop imagines the story of Grace, 12, torn from her one-room schoolhouse and forced to work long hours in the textile mill as a "doffer," turning cotton into thread, alongside her mother, in the spinning room. The child-labor story is gripping--the dangerous working conditions, the work of activists who sought to publicize the abuse--and although sometimes the research overwhelms the story, Grace's present-tense narrative makes the history heartbreak. Grace is no sweet victim. Furious at having to leave school and distressed by her failure to satisfy her French Canadian immigrant family, she quarrels with her best friend and smart ex-classmate, who deliberately injures himself on the machines to get back in school. The fiction is framed by notes about Hine and a bibliography that will lead readers to such books as Russell Freedman's *Kids at Work: Lewis Hine and the Crusade against Child Labor* (1994) as well as to accounts of abuse today.

Hazel Rochman

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Review

"History and fiction are woven seamlessly together in this beautifully written novel. Readers won't soon forget Grace." - *School Library Journal*, Starred

"Vividly portrays mill life and four characters who resist its deadening effects. . . . Solid research and lively writing." - *Kirkus Reviews*

"The child-labor story is gripping." - *Booklist*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Arthur Seaton:

Why don't make it to become your habit? Right now, try to prepare your time to do the important behave, like looking for your favorite book and reading a e-book. Beside you can solve your short lived problem; you can add your knowledge by the e-book entitled Counting on Grace. Try to make book Counting on Grace as your friend. It means that it can to get your friend when you experience alone and beside regarding course make you smarter than ever before. Yeah, it is very fortuned for you. The book makes you considerably more confidence because you can know every thing by the book. So , let us make new experience and also knowledge with this book.

Debra Weeks:

This book untitled Counting on Grace to be one of several books this best seller in this year, that's because when you read this publication you can get a lot of benefit upon it. You will easily to buy this kind of book in the book store or you can order it by using online. The publisher of the book sells the e-book too. It makes you easier to read this book, because you can read this book in your Smartphone. So there is no reason for you to past this publication from your list.

David Mathews:

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