

# *The Teacher's Funeral* by Richard Peck

Imagine your favorite authors wrote book reports on their own books! Arrow asked Newbery author Richard Peck to complete our Book Report Checklist on his latest novel:

### Who is the MAIN CHARACTER of your story?

The main character is a 15-year-old boy named Russell Culver. Russell is a bit of a troublemaker, and he dreams of leaving his small town and going to the Dakotas to join a team of harvesters working with the latest farm machines.

### Describe the SETTING of your story.

The setting is an Indiana farming community in 1904. To write about it, I used memories of visiting my grandparents on their farm, combined with my father's memories of his own childhood. The farm was a whole different world of outdoor toilets and wells, horse and buggies, and coal-oil lamps. I was lost in the romance and didn't notice how hard farm life was.

### Can you give us a PLOT SUMMARY?

When their teacher dies, Russell and his friends think that their one-room schoolhouse will be shut down and Russell's dream of leaving town will come true. But instead they get a new teacher—his bossy older sister, Tansy! Can Tansy deal with burning outhouses, stolen school supplies, and a snake in her desk drawer? You'll have to read the book to find out!

### Discuss the THEME.

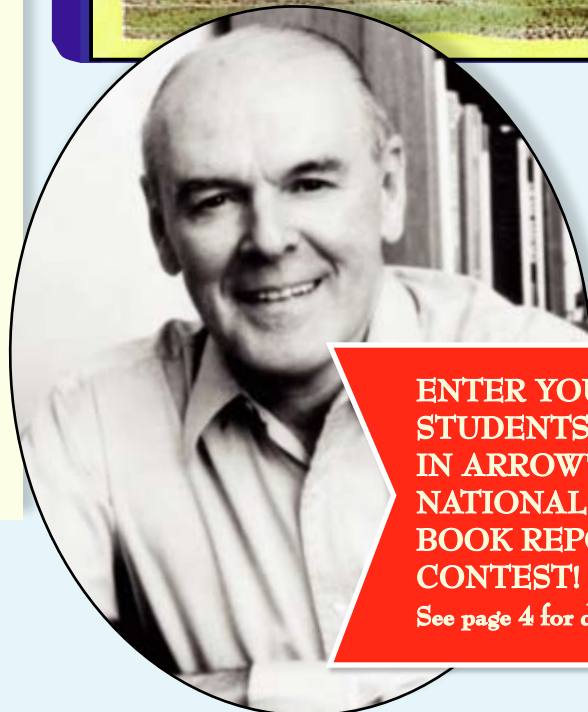
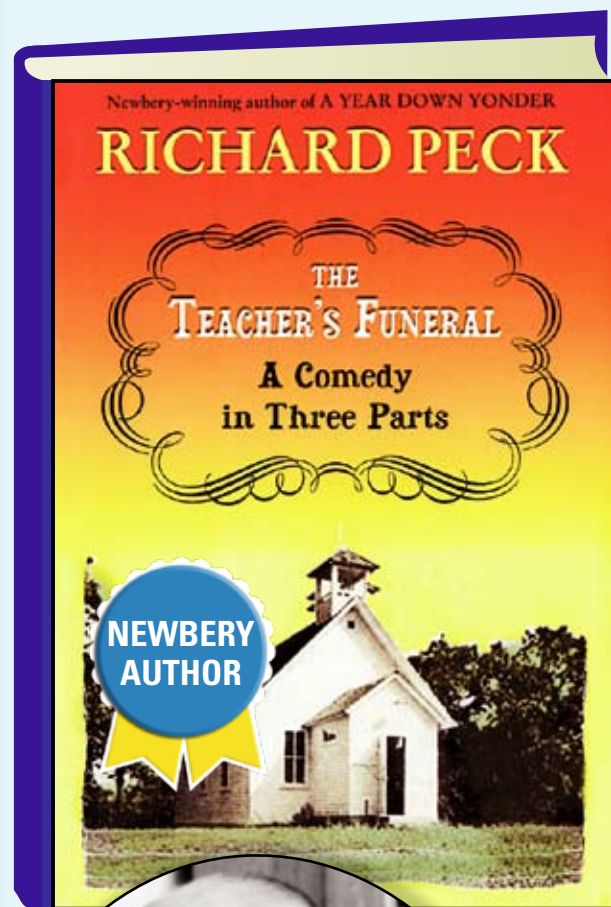
One of the themes is how then-new technology (such as motorcars and telephones) was changing America. It's also about the importance of getting an education during this time. As technology was changing the country, Tansy was trying to change her students and give them the knowledge to help them succeed in this new world.

### What's your OPINION of the book?

Well, I don't know if it's fair to ask an author his opinion of his own book, but I will say that I thoroughly enjoyed writing it!

RICHARD PECK used to be a teacher, but he stopped in 1971—and went home that day to start writing his first book! Now he has written more than 30 books, including the Newbery Medal winner *A Year Down Yonder* and the Newbery Honor Book *A Long Way from Chicago*. Peck grew up in Illinois—where many of his stories are based—but now lives in Manhattan.

To get three of Peck's books at great teacher savings, see the inside back cover!



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