

Moon over Manifest

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It is 1936 in the depths of the Great Depression and Abilene Tucker has been sent by her wandering father to live in the dying town of Manifest, Kansas. She spends the summer making friends and trying to discover the truth about the town, its colorful inhabitants, and her father's past. The mystery revolves around the years 1917-18 when America was fighting in World War I and a deadly outbreak of influenza swept the world. Abilene and her buddies delve into old newspapers, find hidden clues, and uncover secrets through a diviner's stories to reveal the extraordinary friendship between two young men, Ned and Jinx. Abilene is disappointed when she believes there is no trace of her father in Manifest but for the first time in her life, she begins to think of a place as home.

This book is like an onion. It has many layers and when you peel them back, it will make you cry. I began reading Moon Over Manifest by Clare Vanderpool because it won the John Newbery Medal, the highest honor given to fiction for children by the American Library Association. I finished it because the characters are compelling and the plot pulled me in. It reminded me a bit of my favorite book, Holes by Louis Sachar. Like Sachar, Vanderpool skillfully establishes two stories in different times and weaves them together in a satisfying conclusion.

Both books are highly recommended for readers in grades 5 - 8.

Posted by Mary F. on March 8, 2011

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