

The War at Home



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When her father is offered a new job-one he is not permitted to discuss- Mattie McDowell and her parents and sister move from the mountains of Kentucky to the city of Oak Ridge, Tennessee. Entrance to the city is restricted, and security is tight. With World War II still raging, Mattie assumes that her father, and others in Oak Ridge, are working for the war effort. Just as she has begun to adjust to life in Oak Ridge, her twelve-year-old cousin Virgil comes to stay with the family. A few months younger than Mattie, Virgil infuriates her with chauvinistic remarks and the way he monopolizes her father. Slowly, Mattie's resentment toward Virgil changes as the McDowells share his grief over the death of his divorced mother, who has been working in the north. By the war's end, in August 1945, when the city's secret mission is revealed, Mattie has reached a new understanding of her relationship to her family and to Virgil, whom she now counts as part of the family. The unusual setting of Oak Ridge and this city's historic significance will fascinate today's young readers, and the encounters between Mattie and Virgil will amuse and move them. Evoking a strong sense of time and place, as well as, portraying a close-knit mountain family, Connie Jordan Green has written an original and well-crafted story that is as enlightening as it is entertaining.

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