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My Great-Aunt Arizona



Synopsis

Reminiscent of the books of Laura Ingalls Wilder, *My Great-Aunt Arizona* is an inspiring tale rich with history, family, and artistry. Based on a true story, author Gloria Houston's joyous recounting of her great-aunt Arizona's quiet yet meaningful life reminds us of the special place a great teacher can hold in our hearts—even after we've grown up. Arizona was born in a log cabin her papa built in the Blue Ridge Mountains. She grew into a tall girl who liked to sing, square-dance, and—most of all—read and dream of the faraway places she would visit one day. Arizona never did make it to those places. Instead she became a teacher, helping generations of children in the one-room schoolhouse which she herself had attended. Supports the Common Core State Standards.

Book Information

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Age Range: 4 - 8 years

Grade Level: 1 - 4

Customer Reviews

The author of *The Year of the Perfect Christmas Tree* and *Littlejim* again demonstrates her skill as a graceful, affecting storyteller. In spare yet stirring prose, she recounts the life of her great-aunt Arizona, who "was born in a log cabin her papa built . . . in the Blue Ridge Mountains." Arizona and her younger brother attended a one-room school, helped tap the maple trees in spring and "caught tadpoles in the creek." Later, she went away to school, and returned to teach in the same

schoolhouse where she herself learned. For 57 years, Arizona hugged her students, and "taught them words and numbers, and about the faraway places they would visit someday." Lamb's bustling paintings--with glowing characters straight out of Laura Ingalls Wilder--convey the timeless beauty of the region, as well as Arizona's warmth and charisma. Though her great-aunt died at the age of 93, Houston concludes that she "travels with me and with those of us whose lives she touched. . . . She goes with us in our minds." Readers will be among the many touched by this very special relative. Ages 6-9. Copyright 1991 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the School & Library Binding edition.

Grade 1-3-- Arizona, a child of the Blue Ridge, is named by her older brother, a cavalryman out West. As she grows up, she longs to visit the faraway places she learns about, but life doesn't offer her those opportunities. Her mother dies and she takes on family responsibilities. Still she becomes a teacher in spite of the obstacles in her path. For 57 years, she teaches generation after generation of students in her one-room schoolhouse, describing for them the wonders of the larger world that she herself has never seen and inspiring in them the satisfaction of learning. Even after her death she still walks with those whose lives she has touched. The text is superimposed over Lamb's full-page paintings. The pictures reflect an idyllic world of light-filled joy and simplicity. Roads, fences, and houses all fit into the landscape of woods and hills as though placed there by nature rather than by human hands. Arizona ages from a baby to a woman in her 90s gracefully and unaffectedly, keeping her high-button shoes and her aprons. The continuity of her life seems to flow from Lamb's brushes, filled with light and color, and her connection to the future is beautifully expressed in the painting of the road curving out of sight into the misty forest. Thanks to Houston and Lamb, readers can still enjoy Arizona's optimism and determination. --Ruth Semrau, Lovejoy School, Allen, TX Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the School & Library Binding edition.

When I was young, I read this book over and over again until the pages have now all detached from the binding. The dreamy, adventurous girl in the story reminded me of myself, and her life story inspired me to become a teacher, too. Now, two years into my own career in teaching, this story still inspires me to equip my students with the ability to follow their own dreams and fulfill their own goals. This small, old-fashioned book has had a huge shaping force on my life.

I have been reading this book to my students for many years. We discuss that a biography can be

about a famous person's and a not-so-famous person. Arizona Houston Hughes was a not so famous person, but she made a difference in people's lives. This is a warm and loving memory of a grade school teacher who instilled a love of learning and of travel in her students. My classes and I love comparing the idea of a one room "blab" school with the school we have now. I have never had a student who did not love this book.

Love this classic story!

As someone currently in college to become an elementary education teacher, this story is amazing. It was shared with me by a teacher and I had to have it. It's a heartwarming story to not only share with your kids but also your students. Great for any age, not just kids!

I had this book when I taught. I just used it to read to another group of students. They loved it. After reading I asked if they were reminded of anyone. Several said grandmothers. Thanks for having some of my favorite books so I can still share.

Cute story, although my students were sad that Great Aunt Arizona died at the end of the story.

This is an all-time favorite! The story is enchanting and inspiring and the illustrations are endearing. We love this book. This should be added to all children's libraries.

Gloria Houston is a great writer for children (this book) and young adults other titles. Their historical backgrounds and strong lead characters make these books super, in my opinion.

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