



## Counting on Grace

*By Elizabeth Winthrop*

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### Counting on Grace By Elizabeth Winthrop

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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## Counting on Grace By Elizabeth Winthrop Bibliography

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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 dont work, the families wont 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 Lesleys 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 wont 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 heartbreaking. 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*

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**Elizabeth Brown:**

What do you regarding book? It is not important together with you? Or just adding material when you want something to explain what yours problem? How about your time? Or are you busy person? If you don't have spare time to complete others business, it is make you feel bored faster. And you have extra time? What did you do? Everybody has many questions above. They need to answer that question because just their can do which. It said that about book. Book is familiar on every person. Yes, it is proper. Because start from on guardería until university need this specific Counting on Grace to read.

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