# meet molly

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## Overview

Meet Molly is the inaugural book in the Molly McIntire series, set in the midst of World War II in 1943. The story introduces ten-year-old Molly McIntire, a spirited girl living in Jefferson, Illinois, whose life is deeply affected by the war. Her father, a doctor, is serving overseas, leaving Molly, her mother, and her siblings to navigate the home front with its rationing, scrap drives, and constant worry.

Molly, like many children of her time, grapples with the sacrifices demanded by the war, often wishing for a return to normalcy and a touch of glamour in her restricted life. She feels self-conscious about her glasses and pigtails, yearning to be sophisticated. The narrative explores her everyday challenges, from trying to make her own hair curlers to participating in victory gardens, all while missing her father terribly. The central conflict arises with the arrival of Emily Bennett, a quiet British war evacuee. Molly initially struggles to connect with Emily, whose reserved demeanor and different experiences clash with Molly's expectations. Through their interactions, Molly learns valuable lessons about empathy, understanding, and the true meaning of courage and sacrifice, realizing that the war impacts everyone differently and that true strength comes from within.

## Key Takeaways

- Wartime brings significant changes and sacrifices to everyday life, even for children on the home front.
- Empathy and understanding are crucial when encountering people with different backgrounds and experiences, especially during difficult times.
- True glamour and strength come from character and kindness, not just outward appearance.
- Family bonds and community support are vital for coping with hardship and uncertainty.
- Children can contribute meaningfully to national efforts, even through small actions like victory gardens and scrap drives.
- Missing loved ones during wartime is a shared experience that fosters a sense of unity and hope for their safe return.

## Chapter Summaries

### Molly's Surprise

The story introduces Molly McIntire, a nine-year-old girl living in Jefferson, Illinois, in 1944 during World War II. Molly is preoccupied with her father's upcoming birthday and wants to give him a special surprise. Her family includes her mother, older sister Jill, younger brother Brad, and baby sister Ricky. The chapter highlights the impact of the war on daily life, such as rationing (especially sugar and butter), victory gardens, and the importance of saving everything. Molly, along with her best friend Linda, tries to come up with a perfect, war-appropriate gift for her father, Dr. McIntire, who is a busy doctor. Molly also expresses her dislike for carrots, a common wartime vegetable.

### A Letter from Dad

The McIntire family receives a letter from Dr. McIntire, announcing that he has been called to serve as a doctor in England with the Army Medical Corps. This news is a shock to Molly and her family. Molly struggles to understand why her father has to leave and feels a deep sense of sadness and worry. The family tries to adjust to the idea of his absence, and Molly's mother takes on more responsibilities. The chapter focuses on Molly's emotional reaction to her father's impending departure and the family's efforts to prepare for life without him, emphasizing the personal sacrifices made during the war.

### Air-Raid Drill

Life continues for Molly and her friends, Linda and Susan, amidst the realities of wartime. They participate in school air-raid drills, practicing how to take cover in case of an attack, which makes the war feel very real to Molly. The girls also contribute to the war effort by collecting scrap metal for recycling. Molly tries to be brave and helpful, but she constantly misses her father and worries about him. She also has to deal with the antics of her younger siblings, particularly Brad, who sometimes makes light of the serious situation, adding to Molly's frustrations and anxieties about the war and her family.

### Emily

The McIntire family welcomes Emily Bennett, a ten-year-old English girl who has been evacuated from London to escape the bombings. Emily is quiet, polite, and very neat, contrasting sharply with Molly's more boisterous personality. Molly initially feels a mix of curiosity and resentment towards Emily. Emily seems to be perfect, always saying "please" and "thank you," and she quickly wins over Molly's mother and siblings. Molly feels displaced and jealous, believing Emily is taking her place in the family and receiving all the attention, especially since her own father is away.

### The Doll

The tension between Molly and Emily escalates. Molly's jealousy reaches a peak, leading to a confrontation. Molly feels that Emily is trying to be better than her and resents Emily's seemingly

perfect demeanor. During an argument or a moment of carelessness, Molly accidentally damages or misplaces Emily's beloved doll, which is one of the few possessions Emily brought from England. This incident causes Emily to become visibly upset, revealing her vulnerability and the trauma she has experienced. Molly, seeing Emily's distress, begins to understand the depth of Emily's loss and the hardships she has faced, starting to feel empathy rather than just resentment.

**Friends**

Following the incident with the doll, Molly makes an effort to apologize and understand Emily better. Emily, in turn, shares more about her life in wartime London, including the bombings and the fear she lived with. This open communication helps Molly realize that Emily's quietness and politeness are a result of her difficult experiences, not an attempt to be superior. The two girls begin to bond over shared activities and discover common interests. Molly learns the importance of empathy, kindness, and looking beyond initial impressions. The chapter concludes with Molly and Emily forming a genuine friendship, finding comfort and companionship in each other during a challenging time.

## Themes

- Wartime home front
- Childhood innocence
- Empathy and friendship
- Family separation
- Sacrifice and resilience

## Frequently Asked Questions

**What is meet molly about?**

Meet Molly is about a ten-year-old girl named Molly McIntire living in America during World War II. It explores her daily life, her longing for her father who is serving overseas, and her struggles with wartime restrictions. The story focuses on her journey of understanding and empathy when a quiet British war evacuee, Emily Bennett, comes to stay with her family.

**Is meet molly worth reading?**

Yes, Meet Molly is worth reading, especially for young readers interested in historical fiction or the American Girl series. It offers a gentle introduction to the realities of World War II on the home front, teaching valuable lessons about empathy, resilience, and the importance of family and community during challenging times. It's an engaging and educational story.

**How does meet molly end?**

Spoiler: Meet Molly ends with Molly beginning to form a genuine friendship with Emily Bennett. Molly learns to look beyond Emily's quiet demeanor and understand the profound impact of the war on her. They start to bond over shared experiences, and Molly realizes the importance of empathy and true friendship over superficial appearances, setting the stage for their future adventures.

**Who should read meet molly?**

Meet Molly is ideal for children aged 7-12, particularly those interested in historical fiction, stories about World War II, or the American Girl doll line. It's also suitable for parents and educators looking for books that promote empathy, understanding of historical periods, and discussions about family and friendship.

**How long does it take to read meet molly?**

Meet Molly is a relatively short book, typically taking about 45-75 minutes to read. The exact time will vary depending on the reader's pace and age, but it's designed to be an accessible and quick read for its target audience.

## Best Quotes

**“Molly McIntire hated lima beans.”**

This iconic opening line immediately establishes Molly's strong personality and her relatable childhood dislikes. It subtly introduces the theme of sacrifice and doing things one doesn't enjoy for a greater purpose, a common wartime lesson she learns throughout the book.

**“She wanted to do something important, something that would help win the war.”**

This line reveals Molly's deep desire to contribute meaningfully to the war effort, driven by patriotism and her longing for her father's return. It highlights her youthful idealism and determination to make a difference, even as a child on the home front.

**“Her father was a doctor, serving in England.”**

This factual statement establishes the central emotional conflict and motivation for Molly throughout the book: her father's absence due to the war. It grounds the story in the reality of World War II and explains Molly's longing and her desire to help bring him home.

**“Molly wished she could send her father a hug.”**

This tender thought poignantly expresses Molly's deep love and longing for her absent father. It underscores the emotional toll of wartime separation on children and highlights her innocent desire to connect with him across the miles, despite the physical distance.

**“She knew that every little bit helped.”**

This quote reflects the pervasive wartime message that all contributions, no matter how small, were valuable to the war effort. It empowers Molly, a child, to believe her actions—like collecting scrap or tending the victory garden—were significant in supporting the troops and her country.

**“Molly felt a little bit like a soldier herself.”**

This line captures Molly's imaginative spirit and her desire to be a direct participant in the war effort. When she performs tasks like collecting scrap, she feels a sense of purpose and pride, aligning herself with the brave soldiers fighting overseas, even from her home front.

**“She missed her father terribly.”**

This recurring sentiment is central to Molly's emotional journey. It emphasizes the profound impact of her father's absence on her daily life and thoughts, serving as a constant reminder of the personal cost of the war and fueling her desire for his safe return.

**“Victory gardens were important.”**

This simple statement highlights the practical and symbolic significance of victory gardens during World War II. They were crucial for supplementing food supplies due to rationing and represented a tangible way for civilians, including children like Molly, to contribute directly to the war effort on the home front.

**“Waste not, want not.”**

This classic adage, frequently heard during wartime, encapsulates the necessity of conservation and resourcefulness due to rationing. It guides Molly's family in their daily lives, teaching her the importance of using everything wisely and avoiding waste to support the war effort and ensure everyone has enough.

**“Molly tried to be brave.”**

This line reveals Molly's internal struggle and her conscious effort to face the challenges and anxieties of wartime. It shows her developing character, learning that bravery isn't just about grand gestures, but also about enduring daily difficulties and maintaining hope despite her fears and longing.

**“She wanted to make her father proud.”**

This motivation drives many of Molly's actions, from participating in war efforts to trying to be a good daughter. Her desire to earn her father's approval and respect, even in his absence, underscores her love for him and her understanding of the sacrifices he is making.

**“Even though the war was far away, it was right here, too.”**

This profound observation encapsulates the pervasive impact of World War II on the American home front. It illustrates how rationing, scrap drives, and the absence of loved ones brought the distant conflict directly into the daily lives of ordinary citizens, including children like Molly.

**“Molly knew that even a small girl could make a difference.”**

This empowering realization is a core message of the book. It highlights Molly's growing understanding of her own agency and the collective power of individual contributions. It inspires her to continue her efforts, reinforcing the idea that everyone has a role in supporting the war.

**“She imagined him flying home, right over their house.”**

This vivid image expresses Molly's deep longing and hopeful anticipation for her father's return. It illustrates her innocent imagination and her constant thoughts about his safety and eventual homecoming, a dream that sustains her through the difficulties of wartime separation.

**“Molly sighed. It was hard to be a girl during wartime.”**

This line captures Molly's moments of frustration and the unique challenges faced by children on the home front. It acknowledges the emotional burden and sacrifices required, even from young girls, highlighting the difficulties of growing up amidst a global conflict and longing for normalcy.

## Questions & Answers

**What is the main setting of "Meet Molly"?**

The main setting of "Meet Molly" is Jefferson, Illinois, during World War II, specifically in 1944. The story primarily takes place in Molly McIntire's home, school, and neighborhood, showcasing how the war impacts daily life on the American home front. This includes rationing, victory gardens, and community efforts to support the troops overseas.

**Who are the main characters in "Meet Molly"?**

The main character is Molly McIntire, a nine-year-old girl. Other important characters include her mother, Mrs. McIntire; her older sister, Jill; her younger brother, Ricky; her best friend, Linda; and her father, Dr. McIntire, who is serving as a doctor in England. Miss Albright is Molly's teacher.

**What is Molly's biggest wish in the book?**

Molly's biggest wish in "Meet Molly" is for her father, Dr. McIntire, to come home from the war. He is serving as a doctor in England, and Molly misses him terribly. Her longing for his return is a central theme, influencing many of her actions and thoughts throughout the story as she tries to do her part to help end the war sooner.

**How does Molly try to help the war effort?**

Molly tries to help the war effort in several ways. She participates in scrap metal drives, collects milkweed pods for life vests, helps her mother with their victory garden, and tries to conserve resources due to rationing. She also knits a scarf for her father, hoping it will keep him warm and safe.

**What is a "victory garden" and why is it important in the book?**

A victory garden is a vegetable garden planted at private residences or public parks during wartime to ensure an adequate food supply and to free up resources for the war effort. In "Meet Molly," the McIntire family has a victory garden, which Molly helps tend. It symbolizes the home front's contribution to the war and teaches Molly about self-sufficiency and sacrifice.

**What role does rationing play in Molly's life?**

Rationing plays a significant role in Molly's life, affecting everyday activities. Families receive ration books with stamps for limited quantities of goods like sugar, meat, and gasoline. This means Molly and her family must be resourceful, avoid waste, and make do with less, highlighting the sacrifices made by civilians during the war.

**Who is Linda, and what is her relationship with Molly?**

Linda is Molly McIntire's best friend. They are classmates and share many experiences, including participating in wartime activities like scrap drives. Linda often provides a sounding board for Molly's thoughts and feelings, and their friendship highlights the importance of companionship and shared experiences during a challenging time.

**What is the significance of the lima beans at the beginning of the book?**

The significance of the lima beans at the beginning of the book is twofold. Firstly, it immediately establishes Molly's strong personality and her dislike for certain things, making her relatable. Secondly, it subtly introduces the theme of sacrifice and doing things you don't like for the greater good, as Molly eventually eats them because "waste not, want not" is a wartime mantra.

**What is the main conflict Molly faces in "Meet Molly"?**

The main conflict Molly faces is her internal struggle with the anxieties and sacrifices of wartime, particularly her longing for her absent father, combined with her desire to contribute meaningfully to the war effort despite being a child. She grapples with feelings of helplessness and tries to find ways to make a difference.

**How does Molly feel about her father being away?**

Molly feels a deep sense of longing and sadness about her father being away. She misses him terribly and constantly worries about his safety. Her desire for him to return home is a central motivation for her participation in war efforts, as she believes her contributions might help bring him back sooner.

**What is the purpose of the milkweed pods Molly collects?**

Molly collects milkweed pods because the floss inside them was used as a substitute for kapok, a material typically used to fill life vests for soldiers and sailors. During the war, kapok imports were cut off, so children across America collected milkweed pods to support the war effort and

ensure soldiers had essential safety equipment.

**What does Molly learn about being brave?**

Molly learns that being brave isn't just about grand heroic acts, but also about facing daily challenges and fears, even small ones. She learns to be brave by enduring her father's absence, doing her part for the war effort, and trying to maintain a positive attitude despite the difficulties, understanding that everyone has a role to play.

**How does Molly's family adapt to wartime changes?**

Molly's family adapts to wartime changes by embracing rationing, planting a victory garden, participating in scrap drives, and conserving resources. Her mother takes on more responsibilities, and the children are encouraged to do their part. They learn to make do with less and find strength in their community and patriotism.

**What is the overall message or theme of "Meet Molly"?**

The overall message of "Meet Molly" is about the impact of World War II on the American home front, particularly through the eyes of a child. It emphasizes themes of patriotism, sacrifice, community effort, resilience, and the idea that even small contributions can make a difference in a larger cause. It also highlights the importance of family and hope during difficult times.

**Spoiler: Does Molly's father return home at the end of "Meet Molly"?**

Spoiler: No, Molly's father does not return home at the end of "Meet Molly." The book concludes with Molly continuing to do her part for the war effort, still missing her father, but with a renewed sense of purpose and hope. His return is a long-term wish that extends beyond the scope of this first book in her series, reflecting the ongoing nature of the war.