

## Teachers/Discussion Guide

### *Peach When the Well Run Dry*

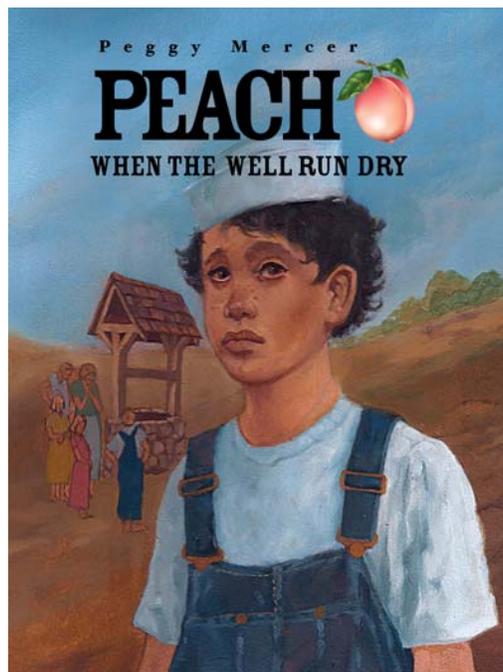
By Peggy Mercer

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#### **Book Description:**

It was summer of 1937 in Southern Georgia—a summer that nine-year-old Peach Lucas would never forget. Peach and his family had been able to make it through the Great Depression. Times had been hard. But like millions of other Americans, they made do. But now, the Lucases and the folks of Georgia were facing yet another catastrophe, one much more difficult than the Depression: a drought of end time proportions.

Crops dried up and died. So did flowers and plants. Animals went thirsty, too. There wasn't even enough water for people to drink. And, if things could get worse, they did. A forest fire raged and Peach's friend High-Pants is accused of starting it. But the summer of 1937 would also be the time that Peach proved himself to a family that had always taken him for granted. He and High-Pants would find an answer to the worst drought of all time. In this coming of age story, Peach stands tall when the well runs dry.



**Target Ages:** 8-11

#### **Vocabulary — Define these words:**

drought  
miracle  
gentle  
sharecropper  
jalopy  
proportions  
suffocate  
edgewise  
sandspur  
sobbing  
tripod  
dynamite  
promise  
outcast  
geyser

#### **Discussion Questions**

Do you think this story could have taken place in another region of the United States, for example, the Northeast or Midwest?

Do you think this story could have taken place during another time, for example, 1998, or 2010?

During the drought, Peach and his family are careful not to waste water. Is this something that important today? Does this only apply to water?

Do you think there's a moral to this story? Is there more than one moral? Explain your answer.

### Comprehension Questions

How many siblings does Peach have?

Why does Peach feel he doesn't "count for much" with his family?

When and where does this story take place?

Who gave Peach his nickname and why?

Saw dust was sprinkled down the center aisle of Peach's church. Why?

What do the people in the town think of High Pants Peterson and why? What does Peach think of him?

What was the first disaster Peach and his family endured? What was the second? Were there any others?

What are some of the things Peach and the others do to try to get water?

Why is High Pants sent to jail?

What happens that makes Peach say "it seems like the Bible Armageddon."

Who finds out how the fire started and how?

How is the drought problem solved? Who solves it?

### Language Arts

Is this book told in the first or third person? How can you tell?

Select a passage from the book and rewrite it using a different point of view.

What is historical fiction? Do you think that term can be used to describe *Peach When the Well Run Dry*? Support your answer with examples from the book.

*Peach When the Well Run Dry* is full of phrases and sayings that express ideas in very creative ways. Read the expression below and "translate" them.

What in tarnation?  
blisterin' hot  
that's just hearsay  
hollerin' like Tarzan  
folks were still having a hey-day with it  
croaked like frogs  
it's all over but the shoutin'  
yonder's a snake  
took y'all a month of Sundays  
Pa's word was law  
slept like knots on a log

On page 63, the narrator says "In the South, it is never too early for neighbors." What do you think this means? Where do you live? Can you make a similar statement using your state or city?

In \_\_\_\_\_, it's never \_\_\_\_\_. or In \_\_\_\_\_, it's always \_\_\_\_\_.

Peach and his family live near a town named Pine Cone. Why do you think it's called that? If your town were to be renamed after something for which it is well known, what would be your town's name?

Write your own historical fiction piece. Select an even from history and create a story set during that time.

### **Social Studies**

This book takes place in southern Georgia. Find Georgia on a map. What is the state capital? What things is the state most closely associated with? When you hear "the South" what things come to mind?

This book was inspired by a drought that took place during the late 1930s. Research that drought. How is the story similar to what happened in real life? How is it different?

*Peach When the Well Run Dry* includes a reference to "the Great Depression." What was the Great Depression? What happened and what kind of impact did it have on Americans?

Research 1937, the year this story takes place. What other important events occurred that year? Select on event and write a one-page description of what happened, who it involved and why it was important.

### **Science**

What causes a drought? Where are some common places in the world that droughts take place? Is there anything we can do to prevent droughts?

During the drought, Peach and his family are careful not to waste water. Today, that effort is called "water conservation." Research and make a list of water conservation tips we can implement today. Are there any other important resources we should conserve?

### **About the Author**

Peggy Mercer is a popular writer and 2008 nominee for Georgia Author of the Year for her children's book, *There Come a Soldier*. Born and raised near Georgia's beautiful Satilla River, about which she often writes, Peggy attended the University of Georgia and earned a B.F.A. from Valdosta State College. Peggy has worked as a photographer, teacher, newspaper columnist and librarian and divides her time between her homes in Georgia and Nashville, Tennessee.



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