



Kit's Surprise: A Christmas Story

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It's just before Christmas when Kit overhears the terrible news that her family may lose their house. Kit wants to earn money to help out, but she gets stuck taking care of cranky Uncle Hendrick and his nasty dog Inky instead. Kit and her best friend have had a fight, so she has no one to turn to. Can she still find a way to make the holidays bright?

Kit's Surprise: A Christmas Story Details

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From Reader Review Kit's Surprise: A Christmas Story for online ebook

Alexandra says

I seriously love Kit's books so far and this one was definitely no exception. It's Christmas time during the Great Depression and Kit's family is going through some rough times. Even with boarders staying at their house, they still don't have enough to pay the bills and are in danger of losing their home.

To boot, Kit's best friend Ruthie comes from a family who is a little bit more well off and can afford things like new dresses and tickets to the ballet. She doesn't understand the plight of people who are poor and who are losing everything. And Kit just can't relate to Ruthie's fantasy world that she lives in full of princesses and movie stars.

Although this is a kids book, it definitely touches on some very heavy subjects but I would say it does a great job of "keeping it real" while also keeping it hopeful and happy. I love the American Girl books so much because I grew up with them and the best part is that they are timeless. Each girl's story takes place in a different time period so it gives young readers a bit of a history lesson but also, the problems that the girls face are problems that can still happen to anyone at any time and so these books are still super relevant. ??

I will always love the original American Girls best but I do love Kit a whole lot as well.

Hannah says

Brought back so many memories! <3

Elizabeth says

At the beginning of this book, I thought Kit was being the brattiest person ever. I hated how she was getting angry at Ruthie left and right. I started liking the story better halfway through and I like the ending.

Maria says

My 9-year-old daughter loved it.

Luna says

I loved it

Joey says

It's almost Christmas time in the Great Depression and things for kits family are about to get harder with eviction hovering around them. With the stress of everything going on Kit and Ruthie fight not understanding each other's perspectives of how to cope. When Kits mother cannot find time to help her uncle Kit goes instead and finds a way to help out her family and bring Christmas cheer to them unexpectedly. She learns hard work will pay off and finally understands Ruthie's love of make-believe and escape from the hard world surrounding them.

This was an okay book, and I liked how sweet Kit was so determined to help her family that she was doing something that she really hated in order to do so.

Stasia says

I love Kit's books. Her stories and the "waste not, want not" attitude remind me of my great grandmother's stories of growing up in the Great Depression. And, it's a bit humbling, isn't it? All Kit wants for Christmas is to pay the family's electric bill so that they can enjoy the lights on the Christmas tree... Sobering!

Charlotte says

Love! I love to see how resilient and adaptable people can be. There's so much to learn.

Sarah Crawford says

Kit's father is still without a job, Christmas is fast approaching and it looks like the family might lose their house to the bank. Meanwhile Kit is given the task of helping to care for her Uncle Hendrick, a man who could have taught Scrooge a few things about being a miser.

He could easily afford to help Kit's family pay the rent but he won't. Nevertheless Kit continues to run errands for him (he is family, no matter what), and the money he pays her to do things she saves up, planning to give it to her mother so they can at least pay their electricity bill.

Another plot-line in the book is about Kit and her friend Ruthie, whose father is still employed. Ruthie offers Kit a dress of hers that her mother modify so it would fit Kit, but Kit refuses the dress and the two girls have a verbal fight and it ends up looking like Kit has lost her best friend forever.

So things look extremely grim for Kit, but Kit keeps on trying to do the best she can and be the best daughter she can for her family. A very good story.

Shelli says

Kit's Surprise, was an excellent story to share with my daughter. Like many families during the depression, Kit's family is struggling to get by. Christmas time as we all know is even more challenging on a families pocket book. Kit goes through the range of emotions that anyone would go through in her scuffed up old shoes and ill fitting dress: embarrassment, anger, pride, fear, and hope for better times. While my own family is not worried about losing our home or not having enough money to pay the electric bill many of the same situations that Kit experienced in the book have been true for our family during the past year since we have lost work due to the current economy. My daughter has had a hard time understanding why we can never go out to dinner at a restaurant or purchase a movie that she is wishing to buy. Thank goodness for the advent of Redbox and the public library! As a mother it has been hard to have to tell her "no, not this time" over just about anything and everything that is not essential to survive. Even though we have talked about finances and counting our blessings this story helped put our situation in a different light for her. Reading about Kit's family showed my daughter how truly blessed we really are.

Amber says

Uncle Hendrick had me wondering if Kit's parents really were living beyond their means. The picture of their house on the front cover of Meet Kit is awfully bougie and nice. Kit's father outright lied to his family for a while, and Kit's mother is always trying to make everything look perfect and just so. Are they typical middle-class status seekers? Is there a kernel of truth to Uncle Hendrick's crabby denunciations? If they were overreaching financially, how did they manage to keep up their image for so long during he worst economic downturn thus far?

Nosy theories aside, the strength of Kit and Ruthie's friendship is proven here! Yesss!!! The Christmas spirit is in the boarding house and the Christmas tree is *lit*, y'all.

Also, something about having your nine-year-old niece run around all over town in the winter as you bark orders at her in exchange for nickels and dimes because her family can't pay this month's electricity bill and you're too cheap to hire a housekeeper strikes me as unheartwarmingly non-character-building, but I don't think Uncle Hendrick's mind is all there.

Rosie says

Oh no!!

Sarah says

9yo and I both enjoyed this whole series (audiobooks are recommended too) during our project study of the Great Depression. Good paired with and . Also with non-fiction, of course.

Maria says

Another great Kit book! Ruthie (Kit's Best friend) and Kit get in a fight right before Christmas. Kit's family

has no money to light their Christmas tree, So Kit earns money herself. Kit's family may get evicted from their house. Kit and Ruthie make up, and it's a wonderful Christmas for Kit, even if it's her last Christmas at home.

I recommend this book! It's great, and I enjoyed reading it!

Ciara says

it's christmas time, but kit's family still doesn't have any money. kit doesn't even have enough money for a new dress. she's outgrown her old winter dress, so her mom took out the hem & sewed rick rack across it to hide the stitch marks. ruthie offers to give kit last year's red holiday dress, which only make kit angry. she's upset enough that ruthie's dad is the banker who threatened her family with foreclosure. she doesn't want any favors or hand-outs from ruthie. when ruthie says she hopes they can all still have lunch together & see the ballet the day after christmas, kit thinks ruthie is being really insensitive to her family's money issues & storms off.

back home, kit learns that the family is behind on the electric bill, & if they don't pay it soon, their power will be cut off. mrs. kittredge is concerned that the boarders won't stay if there's no power, & without the rent the boarders pay, the kittredges will fall behind on all their other bills, including their mortgage. she decides to approach her rich uncle again & ask for financial help. but he again refuses. he doesn't believe in giving anyone something for nothing. he thinks people need to earn their keep, & if they fall on hard times, it must be because they made mistakes somewhere along the way. but he isn't feeling well & asks if mrs. kittredge can send kit to help him with his cranky scotty dog, & to help run errands.

kit very grudgingly goes to help him. she doesn't like him, she doesn't like his dog, & his worst fear is that the kittredges will lose their home & have to move in to his drafty old gothic mansion. her uncle gives her a nickel for transportation on the streetcar, but kit decides to pocket it & walk home. her uncle asks her to come again the next day, & gives her another nickel. this gives kit an idea. her uncle is willing to give her streetcar fare every day that she comes to help him. but if she saves the nickels & walks, maybe she can surprise her parents with the money to pay the electric bill.

as she helps her uncle with his errands, she starts to notice other amenities that her uncle pays for, which kit could do instead. she starts shining her shoes & keeping the payment for herself. she bags his groceries. she picks up deliveries for him. the money is adding up, & kit is also learning that maybe her uncle's dog isn't the worst after all.

but there's a big ice storm on christmas eve & kit can't even walk to the streetcar stop, let alone all the way home. she keeps falling down on the ice. her uncle makes her stay, & kit has to call ruthie's family to pick her up the next day, because they still have a phone & her own family does not. this gives kit & ruthie a chance to patch up their friendship. back home, kit gives her mother the money she made doing chores for her uncle, & it's enough to pay the electric bill. ruthie surprises kit with the red holiday dress, & her mother offers to pay for lunch & the ballet the next day. kit also gets a doll in the likeness of amelia earhart (part of kit's fight with ruthie was that ruthie loves princesses & fairy tales, which kit is more practical & level-headed; to apologize, kit wrote a story about a princess named ruthie & had her talented boarder striling illustrate it). christmas is saved!

my only beef with these books is that i really don't get what the fuck the uncle's problem is. i can't tell if he's

supposed to be a remotely sympathetic character or not. there's an element of learning a lesson, that you have to work for what you want, that no one gets a free ride, & that's not a bad lesson for kids. but i don't know if it's a very good lesson to draw from the great depression. many people lost EVERYTHING in the great depression through absolutely no fault of their own. they weren't living beyond their means, they weren't lazy, they just had the misfortune to keep their money in a bank that went under & this was before bank deposits were insured. my great-grandparents starved to death during the depression. not because they were too lazy to find food for themselves, but because they had no money to procure food & whatever food they managed to scrounge up, they shared among their thirteen children first. they starved to death, in the united states of america, in the 20th century.

in light of things like that, this uncle dude seems like a total asshole. like, if he was alive today, he'd probably be demanding to see barack obama's birth certificate & wanting to do away with the department of education. i bet he really hated FDR. i think it's kind of sick that he made a ten-year-old slave away from him all day everyday to pay her family's electric bill. i really don't think that kind of thing is the responsibility of children.
