



The Christmas Hirelings

Mary Elizabeth Braddon

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The Christmas Hirelings Details

Date : Published 1894 by Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent & Co.

ISBN :

Author : Mary Elizabeth Braddon

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Genre : Fiction, Audiobook, Holiday, Christmas, Classics

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From Reader Review The Christmas Hirelings for online ebook

Cindy Rollins says

This was a free Audible Christmas offering with Richard Armitage and delightfully better than expected. Armitage not only has a melliflous voice himself, he does other voices even female voices without seeming ridiculous. The thing that heightened my attention was the ideas on educations which very much paralleled Charlotte Mason's ideas. It was so pronounced I looked up the author and found she was contemporary to Charlotte and also a mother of 6 along with being a stepmother. She is also the author of the famed Lady Audley's Secret which I vaguely remember reading.

Lisa says

Awww super sweet traditional Christmas tale - recommended for a feel good read.

Suzanne says

Although this was written over 100 years ago, it felt timeless. The premise is some wealthy aristocrats without younger family members hire 3 children to make Christmas more enjoyable. Moppet was adorable and totally stole the show.

Tarissa says

What a delightful vintage treat!

We meet a Scrooge type of man at Christmastime... He doesn't know it, but he needs some holiday cheer. Children have been vacant for far too long in his home, and he has forgotten the happiness that family brings.

The proposition? Some children should be hired to fill such a large, empty house with Christmas joy and laughter. If one has the money, why not?

A beautiful and heartwarming Victorian holiday tale. I could see this even being read aloud to young ones during the Christmas season.

One more note... The idea expressed about education are profound... The children who ran and played

outside enjoyed much better health than any other kid in the neighborhood who had to study all day long... This is profound stuff, people, even if it is presented in such a sweet, simple way.

My opinion, overall? You should read it! It's definitely worth a read.

Netta says

Too soppy even for the classy Christmas story of an old man redemption.

Adam says

Review of the audiobook narrated by Richard Armitage.

It's obvious why this Public Domain book from 1894 was apparently forgotten before its revival by Audible as a free reward for their 2018 Christmas season. Predictable and derivative, yet just charming enough to be an ok use of 4 hours to feel a little Christmas spirit.

Richard Armitage does inject life into the book with his performance. I'd definitely listen to more books he's narrated.

Final verdict: 3 star story, 4.5 star narration, 3.5 stars overall

Elaine says

A short and simple, feel-good Victorian novel, with no complex characters, nor much conflict, nor much of a plot. The trajectory of the story is evident very early on; nevertheless, seeing it play out is pleasantly diverting. Unfortunately, the ending was a disappointment. It was a happy one, as expected, but just a quick wrap-up. Braddon seems to have run out of steam, sighed ho-hum, and gone off to plan another novel. (According to Wikipedia, she wrote more than 90 in her career.) I listened to the well-narrated audiobook, which was a free holiday offering from Audible—a feel-good interlude in the day's occupations.

Mahlon says

Let's hire some children and give them a good Christmas... That's a creepy concept even for 1895. But on the positive side Richard Armitage reading anything is always a treat.

Linda says

I listened to the audiobook that was the Christmas gift from Audible. It was a cute, predictable story with a Dickensque feel. I listened while wrapping Christmas presents. It was a nice gift. Thanks Audible.

Sandy says

This novel is quite a diversion from the "sensation novels" of Mary Elizabeth Braddon, and very different from the sappy holiday fare that sometimes passes off as representative of the "Spirit of Christmas". Only about 30 percent of the story actually takes place during the Christmas season. The remainder is a back-story which is interesting and essential to the understanding of the Christmas events. The novel is a good example of the craft of this author, her ability to describe in lively language the details of events, of physical surroundings, and of highly-individual and sometimes quirky characters. I hope to make the reading of this novel an annual event (in December, of course!).

Barbara says

Published in 1894, this story falls within the Victorian period, and certainly reads like a Victorian melodrama. The author was considered a sensationalist, and for decades it was out of print. It has all of the twists and turns we have come to expect of Victorian writing, particularly Christmas tales. For this reader, it was not predictable and in fact, surprised me.

A free offering this month on Audible for members, it is worth a listen.

Julia says

Short and sweet, rather unlike most of Braddon's stories! A cranky old rich Scrooge character agrees to humor his favorite houseguest by allowing him to invite some unknown children to spend Christmas with them in the spacious old mansion. You never know what Christmas miracles may happen when children are there to brighten up the home. I listened to this as a free download from LibriVox.org. First published in 1894.

Lis Carey says

This is a Victorian Christmas tale, and it's a good one.

Sir John Penlyon is spending Christmas with his niece, Adela, and his friend Thomas Danby, a makeshift family for the aging man with no closer family left to him. Long widowed, his older daughter died just a few years after her own marriage, with no children. His younger daughter married a penniless curate, in defiance of her father, and was of course disowned.

Adela mentions how dull a Christmas with no children is, and Sir John, a bit of a curmudgeon, says Christmas is pointless for a household without children. In short order, Danby has persuaded Sir John to agree to his scheme to hire some suitable young children to enliven their holiday.

In time for Christmas, Danby brings two little girls and a young boy, sweet, endearing children who do

indeed enliven the holiday. The younger girl, Moppet, in particular, charms Sir John and endears herself to him.

But this is a Victorian Christmas tale, and Moppet, inevitably, falls dangerously ill. Sir John begins to think he made a mistake in opening his home and his heart. Also, of course, the origin of these children becomes a far more urgent matter. The question of whether a wounded and broken family can be healed becomes the center of this story.

It's very well done, and very moving. Recommended.

I received this audiobook as part of Audible's Audible Originals program, and am reviewing it voluntarily.

Peter says

A bored, "bah, humbuggy" Earl agrees to hire three unknown children to make his house guests' Christmas more genial. The Queen of Victorian Sensation Fiction, who's best known for blood curdling tomes like *Lady Audley's Secret*, wrote one book for children and this is it. Short, sweet and perfect for a quick read on a plane en route for the holidays, it is a bit predictable but very satisfying.

Anya says

This was a good surprise, especially since it was a free Christmas gift from Audible. The story is sweet and simple, in the classic style of Dickens/Collins. The plot is quite predictable but still entertaining. I didn't know the author but I'll be probably reading something else from her in the future! The performance from Richard Armitage was obviously perfect, so overall a very good experience.
