



Kirsten's Boxed Set

Janet Beeler Shaw

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6 book boxed set featuring 1854 Kirsten, An American Girl.

Kirsten's Boxed Set Details

Date : Published September 1st 1990 by American Girl Publishing Inc (first published 1990)

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Author : Janet Beeler Shaw

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From Reader Review Kirsten's Boxed Set for online ebook

Chelsea Gouin says

How disappointing. Janet Beeler Shaw is at the wheel of Kirsten's stories, taking over the reins from Valerie Tripp. However, Shaw pushes the fast forward button on the already short stories, skipping over details and somehow making her characters void of any emotion. Kirsten is an immigrant from Sweden, her family wants to make a new home in America, out west to be precise. Vaguely brings up feelings of Little House as Kirsten learns English, picks honey, and burns down her log cabin. There is some death early on, but the rushed story gives no real impact on the loss. Kirsten doesn't have any special quality as the first to Girls did, she's just inquisitive I guess? I know Shaw is at the helm of a few other Girls, so hopefully her style improves.

Rebecca Abrams says

I read Kirsten's Surprise A Christmas Story
Reading level is upper elementary, 640L
It is Historical Fiction

This story was interesting but is limited in audience. I think girls will really enjoy this book. It is about one of the American Girl Dolls, Kirsten, telling the story of her life as a pioneer girl. Kirsten Larson and her family celebrate their first Christmas in America, but they try to keep their old traditions alive. Kirsten tries to celebrate as they would in Sweden telling of her struggles adapting to the new country and her hope to have a wonderful Christmas with her family in America.

Pamela says

Rereading the American Girl collection is the best. From Kirsten, one learns to have heart and be brave. Kirsten is an immigrant and a pioneer, so we get two viewpoints in her books. (I always loved Kirsten, especially because of my mother's Swedish background.) I continue to hope that the current generation will find and love these books as much as I do.

Ella Rose Carlos says

When I was a kid, my mama made me a pioneer dress, so I could be Kirsten! I had a bonnet and everything! I love this character and all her adventures! ♥

Briana says

There was a doll named Kirsten, one of 5 "American Girl" dolls at the time. She was all I wanted out of life for three years, until finally one glorious Christmas I got her, in her 1854 pioneer outfit, with the "Meet Kirsten" book about her new life in America (she was an immigrant from Sweeden). I have every accessory, book, outfit, and even furniture ever made for her. She was my obsession for a long, long time. The only doll I ever got into, as I was not really a doll girl, but I adored her.

colleen bucco says

I love the American girl books because tell what life was like in different times of American history. I also like the ideal that there is history in the back of the book. Girls can get a feel what life was for girls in different times too

Julie Blackwell says

I have read a ton of the American Girl books in my lifetime, but mostly when I was in Mrs. Bailey's third grade class. Kirsten is one of my favorites, but I have loved them all. (Molly is probably my number one, followed by Kit, and a tie for third between Kirsten and Samantha, in case you were wondering.) When library day rolled around, I would go upstairs to the library and often came back to class with an American Girl book tucked under my arm. I would take it home that night and usually finish it before school the next day, which left me in a pinch with nothing to read waiting for library day again. I still haven't read every single AG book, but these made up a huge part of my childhood, and I am hoping to share the love of AG with a daughter of my own one day.

Emily says

reasons why this book was awesome:

- for some reason as a child I had a thing for plots that involved deadly fevers.
 - kirsten is a cool name.
 - one room school houses
 - swedes!
 - santa lucia
 - braid loops
-

Amanda Kay says

Kirsten was one of the original American Girls and as such, was a vital piece of my childhood. I can remember lying in the backyard barefooted, feet up, pretending I was an awesome pioneer girl.

One of the most important points of the original American Girls was the use of realistic storylines. I still remember sobbing when Matra died, and feeling so horrible for Kirsten when her little racoon burned down the family home.

The original American Girls were strong, yet open to learning. They were insightful, yet often made mistakes. In comparison to the newer additions to the historical characters, the worlds of Felicity, Kirsten, Addy, Samantha, and Molly cannot be topped. They were complemented by Kaya, Josefina, and Kit, but they have been replaced by Marie-Grace, Cecile, Rebecca, and Julie - all of whom have their own merits, but not near as much heart.

Solid 4 stars. I wanted to be Kirsten, not Laura Ingalls Wilder.

Lola says

When I was a little girl, my brother's girlfriend gave me her old Kirsten doll. Unfortunately, I thought that you could hairspray their hair. You really shouldn't, and I tried to fix it by giving her an uneven bob. I always think of my mutilated Kirsten doll when I read these books. Like my doll, Kirsten and her family just keep on surviving whatever is thrown their way. The story of immigrants is the story of America, and I'm happy that American Girl chose to tell Kirsten family. It's also refreshing that Kirsten's family is Swedish instead of Irish or German. I enjoyed learning more about the culture and traditions of her family.

Liz says

I haven't read these books since I was a kid. I think I was ten when I got my Kirsten doll for Christmas. At the time, I was really into the 'Little House on the Prairie' books and I was really excited to get my doll.

Unfortunately, I actually had to return my doll soon after getting her when her eyelashes began to fall out. But I soon got a replacement and she became one of my fondest childhood toys. My sister and I would play with our dolls for hours (she had Samantha) making up new stories and adventures for them. I can't remember when I got the boxed set of all her books. It might have been that Christmas, but I think it was a bit later.

Which didn't matter much, since I'd already devoured all the American Girl books that I could find at the school library. I can even remember where they were. As you came in the door you would turn right and go around the circular computer desk. Behind the bulky Macintosh computers, on the bottom shelf - where you had to wedge yourself past the computer chairs - were the American Girl books.

Not too long ago, I picked up my books from Mom's house. I've been feeling rather nostalgic for my childhood favorites (unfortunately, I also recently found out that my huge collection of Nancy Drews are long gone). Along with the box set of Kirsten's books, I also have Felicity's box set.

Rereading these books was quite a trip. They're written in very simple language, as you'd expect for books marketed to ten-year-olds. The books themselves are slim - around 60 pages each - and focus on six focal events in the main American Girl's life: the introduction, school, Christmas, tenth birthday, an act of heroism, and the final moving forward book. In the case of Kirsten, we follow her as her family immigrates from Sweden to Minnesota and they work to build a new life.

The thing that surprised me most in rereading Kirsten's stories was the sheer amount of terrible things that happen to Kirsten. Honestly, they're kind of horrible. In the first book, Kirsten's best friend Marta - whose

family immigrates from Sweden with hers - dies of cholera...after they reach America. It's really quite tragic and heartbreaking. As the books move on, Kirsten befriends a Native American girl, Singing Bird, only to have her move West; Kirsten's mother almost dies in childbirth; a tornado sweeps through the farm; Kirsten and her little brother are attacked by a black bear; Kirsten and her father almost perish in a winter blizzard; their cabin burns down; and Kirsten and her older brother come across a dead man in the woods.

I can't believe how many bad things happen to this poor girl! I don't remember such bad luck befalling any other American Girl. To top things off, Kirsten's at the root of half the terrible things that happen to her family. She foolishly puts her little brother and herself in danger when they get attacked by the bear and it's her fault that the family cabin burns down.

Yet, in the end, it's hard work, perseverance, and a good amount of luck that gets her family through their first year in America. And, much as I did so many years ago, I ate the books up. However simply written, however frustratingly foolish Kirsten can be, I still enjoyed reading the books. I felt transported back to my childhood: reading curled up in bed or on the bus to and from school. Playing with Kirsten and Samantha dolls (and later our two Felicities) around the farm.

It was a happy childhood, caught up in the world of our imaginations, and in rereading these books, it was like being ten again. Really, I can't ask more than that from a handful of paperback books.

*Note: I have the dark burgundy boxed set with the classic white paperback covers.

Krista Rey says

I read Happy Birthday Kristen and I loved it. It is easy to read and has appropriate vocabulary for the 2-3 grades. The pictures are beautiful and it is a book that kids can relate too. This book is about a girl named Kristen whose family came to America from Sweeden. In this book, the family celebrates Kristen's birthday. The book starts out with her and her friends making a quilt together at school for their teacher. Kristen loves her friends and loves school. When her mom has a baby and gets sick, Kristen must stay home and help with the chores and the new baby. She feels missed out from school and she thinks that everyone forgot about her birthday. Her mom doesn't and has a birthday party for Kristen when all the families come over for the barn raising. Kristen feels so special to have all her friends over and they finish their quilt. When it is time to open to open presents, her friends gave her the quilt because they wanted her to feel their love. I really loved this book because it is fiction, but it shows this time period so well. It shows what life was like and what people actually did and kids can learn from this. This would be a book that teachers could use for silent reading time in the classroom as it is too girlie to read to the entire class.

Shirley says

We listened to this set. I hadn't read the books before. I really liked the story! Great narrator. First book had some good descriptions of immigrating and of Minnesota that tied in well with our US geography class.

Rachel says

Kirsten's stories were the most "scary" to me, as she lived in a rational poverty, as an outsider to a fledging, wild nation, that I had never known. I cried at her best friend's death of cholera along the way to the midwest. I scorned strict Miss Winston, who had no feeling for Kirsten's struggles with a new home. I was thrilled that she befriended Singing Bird, and that we got to take a glimpse into native american culture as well. In adulthood, as I come closer to my own ethnicity and immigrant roots, I appreciate Kirsten's story more than I did as a child. They are definitely worth a re-read.

Maggie Wiggins says

Some girls love horses, some love dolphins, and some love pioneers. I don't mean to be sexist, but the majority of these fans are girls, in my experience. For the reader who hasn't already discovered the American Girls series, this is a great gateway bus-set. Lightly historical and very relatable, it's a popular choice for second grade book reports in my area. Readalikes: Dear America Series, the American Sisters series by Laurie Lawlor (a very sweet and smart former instructor), and the Little House books by Laura Ingalls Wilder
